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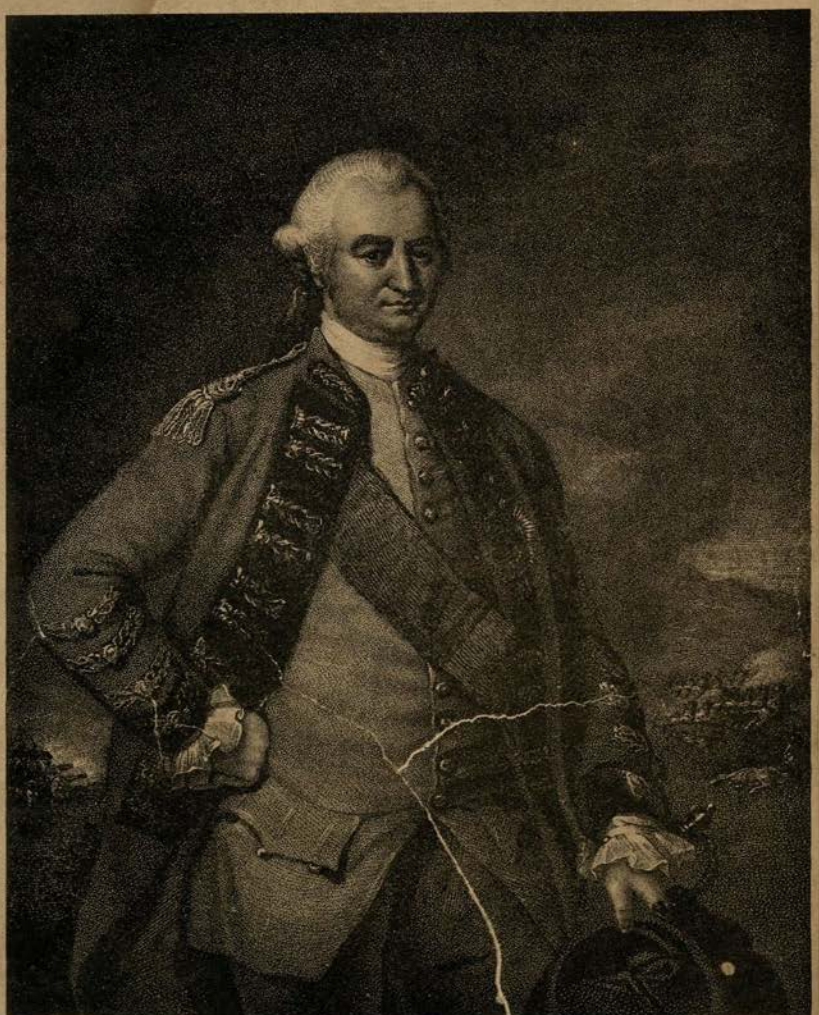
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*Lord Clive.*

# THE FOUNDERS OF THE INDIAN EMPIRE.

## Clive, Warren Hastings, and Wellesley.

# LORD CLIVE.



BY

COLONEL G. B. MALLESON, C.S.I.

AUTHOR OF "THE HISTORY OF THE FRENCH IN INDIA."

*WITH A PORTRAIT AND FOUR PLANS.*

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"A man of instincts and insights. A man, nevertheless, who will glare fiercely on any object, and see through it, and conquer it; for he has intellect, he has will, force beyond other men."—CARLYLE.

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THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED

TO

THE REVEREND EDWARD MALLESON,

RECTOR OF GREAT BOOKHAM, SURREY,

AS A SLIGHT MARK OF THE RESPECT AND AFFECTION,

BASED UPON AN UNBROKEN INTERCOURSE

EXTENDING OVER HALF A CENTURY,

BORNE HIM BY HIS BROTHER.

# PREFACE.

It has often occurred to me that the title of the people of these islands to the control of the interests of the vast populations inhabiting Hindústán, so often called in question during recent years, might be fairly investigated by a crucial examination of the proceedings of the warriors and statesmen whose title to be regarded as the founders of the Indian Empire has never been questioned. These warriors and statesmen are—Clive, Warren Hastings, and Wellesley. The present volume deals with the first of the illustrious trio.

The claim of Clive to be the founder—the digger of the foundation, the organiser of the stratum, upon which our Indian empire rests—is undeniable. When he first went to India, in 1744, the few Englishmen and Frenchmen on the coast were the rent-paying tenants of the native lords of the soil. They did not possess in fee simple a single acre of land. They had no care to possess one. They went out to trade for the Company of which they were the servants. Their salaries were ridiculously small, but they were allowed,

on reaching a certain grade, to trade on their own account. It was to this trade that they looked to recoup themselves for the weariness of exile, and to atone for the privations of their earlier years of service.

Suddenly the whole condition of affairs changed. The war between France and England in Europe spread to India. The settlers of France expelled the settlers of England from their principal factory. Called upon by the native chief of the country, the common landlord of both, to restore it, they refused. When he raised an army to compel them they beat his army.

That was the first revolution. It inverted on the south-eastern coast of India the position of the settlers and the lords of the soil. The latter recognised the former as physically a superior race.

The second act in the drama was the contest between those two races, each physically stronger than the children of the soil, for superiority. The contest was long and obstinate. When the countries they represented were at peace in Europe, the settlers fought as adherents of rival puppet princes. These puppet princes thought they were fighting for their own hands. It was only when the genius of Clive had caused the contest to terminate in favour of the English, that the victorious native puppet recognised that he had been fighting for a gilded throne under the protection and under the control of the foreign settler.

But who were these puppet princes? Not the

genuine natives of Hindústán, not the princes of the people of the soil. Those princes had disappeared. They had died out or had been forcibly removed by the descendants of the rude warriors of Central Asia, who, by the power of the sword, had exchanged the steppes of the deserts beyond the Oxus for the green pastures of Hindústán. So far, then, as the people were concerned, the change was simply a change in overlordship. The foreign descendants of the Mughul had had to yield to the foreign adventurers from beyond the sea.

It was in effecting this change in India south of the river Krishna that Clive first rose into prominence. But for him, the English would not have been the victors. In Southern India, then, he laid the foundation—rough and ready at the outset, but still the foundation—of a dominion that was to endure. The people, properly so-called, had been accustomed to be ruled; they called eagerly for a master to repress lawlessness within their borders; and they welcomed the firm but mild government of the European as an improvement on the rude tyranny of the equally foreign Mughul.

In Bengal the conditions were in many respects similar. There, too, the Hindú princes of a preceding era had been thrust out by the conquerors from Afghánistán and Central Asia. For more than five hundred years Bengal had not known a ruler professing the Hindú faith. The Hindú landed aristocracy still, indeed, remained titular lords of petty states, or the proprietors of large acres, under the

foreigner. The industrial middle classes of the same race conducted the extensive commercial and monetary transactions of the rich provinces in which they were born. The Afghán and the Central Asian foreigners protected a system which, without exertion on their part, tended alike to enrich the country and to supply them with loans in case of need. Their followers, settled for four or five hundred years in the province, gradually adopted the tastes and habits of the aboriginal race. But they did not oust them from any of the professions in which they had excelled. The Hindú still remained pre-eminent in finance, pre-eminent in trade. In Eastern Bengal alone did the Muhammadans show any disposition to rivalry. They built there a city, now the capital of that district, known as Dháká, which became the head-quarters of their co-religionists.

For centuries the two races lived side by side under the rule of the Muhammadan overlord. Sometimes this overlord was an independent prince, sometimes a prince who strove for independence; oftener, especially in the prosperous times of the Mughuls, a viceroy representing the sovereign of that race; in their season of decay, a viceroy aiming at independence. The last-named condition of affairs had ruled during the fifty years immediately preceding the catastrophe of the Black Hole. Just four years prior to the death of the ruler whom the Muhammadans venerate as the greatest of the Mughuls—the capable but bigoted Aurangzíb—the Government of Bengal had been seized by a man who, the son of a

poor Bráhman, had been sold to a Persian merchant, had been brought up as a Muhammadan, and who, under the name of Murshid Kuli Khán, had developed extraordinary abilities. In the troubles which followed the death of Aurangzíb, Murshid Kuli Khán made Bengal and Orísá a virtually independent satrapy. He gave his own name to the capital, previously called Makhsusábád, and that name it retains to the present day. Fourteen years later he added Bihár to his dominions, and he obtained for his government patents of legality from the Court of Dihlí.

The large Hindú populations of the three provinces had been for so many centuries accustomed to the sway of the foreigner that they had ceased even to inquire as to his family or his race. They only required a strong man, a man who would protect their trade and commerce, would repress turmoil within, would defend them against an enemy from without. Murshid Kuli Khán did all this; and notwithstanding that in the eyes of the Hindú priests he was an outcast, a pervert from their faith, the Hindús gave him their most complete adhesion. After his death, his son-in-law Shuja'u'dín Khán, a Khorasání of the tribe of Nádir Sháh, succeeded to the vacated seat, and pursuing the same system, obtained the same confidence. But with him the line ended. One of his confidants had been Alí Vardí Khán, a man of great ability, whom he had nominated Governor of Patná. On the death of Shuja'u'dín in 1739, Alí Vardí, like a true Mughul, appeared as a claimant for the viceregal chair, defeated and slew the son of his late

master, and gained it. The moribund Court of Dihlí confirmed him in his office.

Alí Vardí Khán was a strong man, and he assumed power when a strong man was most needed. Almost immediately after his accession, the Maráthás, the latest warrior representatives of the Hindú race, began an invasion which for the nine years that followed was intermittent. The Hindús of Bengal had no sympathy with the Hindú invaders. They clung, all the more for the invasion, to the strong Muhammadan arm which alone could protect them. Alí Vardí struggled manfully, but not always effectually; and when finally, in 1751, he made peace with the invaders, he was forced, as the only means to ensure it, to yield Katak, and to agree to pay twelve lakhs of rupees annually as the *chauth*, or tribute, of Bengal!

Still, from Bengal proper he did expel the invaders. Little recked the Hindú inhabitants regarding the disposal of the twelve lakhs, provided the expenditure obtained for them peace and security. And it did, for the remainder of the life of Alí Vardí, obtain those results.

Alí Vardí died in 1756. His title to the government of the three provinces had been a sharp sword wielded by a strong hand. He had slain the son of his early master because he could not produce such a title. His own spoiled grandson and successor was of the same material as the dispossessed son of his early master. What was still more against him was the fact that he was too young and too inexperienced

to understand that the first requirement of a ruler of Bengal was to respect and protect the property, the trade, the private wealth, of his subjects. Sirájuʼd daulah had scarcely seated himself upon the masnad before he made war upon all three. In so doing, whilst he alienated the influential classes alike of his Hindú and Muhammadan subjects, he roused against himself the righteous indignation of a foreign race which, in virtue of privileges granted to them by his predecessors, had settled, and were carrying on a trade, lucrative to themselves and to his subjects, in Bengal.

How the foreigners, led by a man of consummate daring and genius, rose to avenge that outrage—how, with the sympathy and the support of the more influential of the children of the soil they did avenge it—is told in this book. The result may be described almost in a phrase. The Hindú peoples of the three provinces exchanged one foreign ruler for another, a ruler who would protect them for a ruler who had begun his short reign by oppressing them. That was simply all. If the new race of foreigners were usurpers, the foreign race they expelled were equally usurpers, equally alien in language and in religion. As the royal Mughuls had fallen before Murshid Kuli Khán, as the grandson of Murshid Kuli had fallen before Alí Vardí, so now the grandson of Alí Vardí fell before the right arm of the foreign race which, in his presumption, he had endeavoured to expel.

In laying, then, in Bengal the foundations of a British empire, Clive violated no principle not admitted

alike by those whom he expelled and those over whom he assumed rule. The principle had been not only admitted but acted upon from generation to generation. It was the principle of the right of the strongest to protect and to govern a busy, industrious, money-acquiring race, incapable of defending or of governing themselves. The catastrophe of 1756 proved that the non-assertion of that right by a foreigner able to assert it meant annihilation. For him there was no middle course.

There is a marked difference between a principle and the mode of applying that principle. In the instance just referred to, there can, I think, be no two opinions regarding the necessity of applying the principle; regarding the mode in which it was applied there may be many. I shall not here anticipate the conclusions at which I have arrived on this point. It will suffice to insist that the misgovernment of the Central Asian foreigner had placed before the European foreigner the alternative of intervention or of destruction.

The European foreigner intervened. How—with what immediate result—is told in the pages which follow. The story, after reaching a certain point, confines itself almost to the narration of the life of the stern and resolute man who was the first of Englishmen to recognise the necessity of taking a decided course; who, in Southern India, founded British rule on the basis from which he expelled a European foreigner; and who, in Bengal, brought about a similar result by a direct collision with the

satrap of the Mughul, and, later, with the Mughul himself.

In carrying out this task I have endeavoured to preface the introduction on the scene of the chief actor by setting clearly before the reader the position of affairs in Southern India which forced his great qualities into striking prominence. I have thus described the state of affairs in Southern India immediately prior to the appearance of Clive in a position of real responsibility; I have indicated the impression the scene thus opened to him made upon, the resolution it helped to form in, his mind; I have gone back then to trace his earlier career, his early hopes, his early disappointments, following him step by step to the critical moment of his first introduction to the reader, and describing at the same time the events in Southern India which, from small beginnings, had so accumulated as to make that special moment most critical. When the story is brought up to that point, no further management is necessary. There is a clap of thunder, a flash—the heaven-born General produces light out of darkness: he strikes down the power of France, and he stands before the world the founder of the Indian Empire.

Such is, at least, the scene as it appeared to his contemporaries. Before he had become a hero, Clive had not been thought of. Up to that time no one knew aught of his antecedents; no one cared to know of them. He was one of the herd; as fit, apparently, to help to fill a ditch as any other man. It was when he suddenly showed himself a man of action, a

man likely to guide the course of events, that the questions were asked which, under similar circumstances, always rise to the lips of the multitude: "Who is he?" "What was he?"

In endeavouring in these pages to answer those questions I have especially devoted my researches to three periods of his life. The first, the period of little more than eighteen months—between his sudden appearance at Trichinápalli in May 1751 and the close of 1752; the second, from his sailing up the Huglí in December 1756 to his return to England in 1760; the third from his re-landing in Calcutta in May 1765 to his departure in January 1767. It is on his conduct during those three epochs—epochs of Indian life—that posterity will judge Clive. Small interest, in comparison, will it take in the intrigues, the disappointments, the annoyances of his first and second visits to England. Those intrigues, those annoyances, those disappointments, were the consequences of the acts of his Indian life. Passing over those periods, then, as briefly as I might, I have endeavoured to concentrate the interest of the reader on the actions—for Clive was essentially a man of action—of his very remarkable career in India. The third and last visit to England I have necessarily described in greater detail, because his reception by the world of London was the crucial test applied to certain acts of the active life, the propriety of which was not apparent to some of his contemporaries. Had the inculpated acts been able to stand that crucial test, to pass through the trying ordeal without leaving a stain on their author, there

had been, possibly, for Clive, in Europe or America, a career scarcely less brilliant than that which has given him a name for ever in the history of the connection between Great Britain and India.

In performing my self-allotted task I have striven to be impartial. I am sure I have not written as a partisan. With the admiration I naturally feel for a man who did as much as any man who ever trod this earth to make of this small island in the Atlantic the Queen of nations, her roots spreading all over the world, it is with pain, greater than I can describe, that I have been forced to the conclusions I have recorded in the last chapter. I have done justice, I am certain, to the brilliant genius which changed the future of India; to the daring, the coolness, the energy, the clear-sightedness, the superiority to circumstances, displayed on every trying occasion. The greater, then, is my mortification that I cannot deny the existence of the alloy which, at times of peculiar temptation, disfigured a character which would have been otherwise without reproach.

I append a list of the sources on which I have based my work. The memoirs of the Frenchmen who flourished in India in the middle of the eighteenth century have been the more valuable inasmuch as the *pièces justificatives* which form the bulk of their volumes give almost the entire official correspondence of the period. *Orme's History*, Caraccioli's *Life of Clive*, the *Sayar il Muta'akhkhirín*, *Transactions in India*, Ives's *Voyage and Historical Narrative*, Grose's *Voyage to the East Indies*, Vansittart's *Narrative*,

Holwell's *Indian Tracts*, Francklin's *Life of Shah Aulum*, Mr. Henry Strachey's *Narrative*, are contemporary records which form, with the French memoirs, the basis for a history of the period. With respect to more modern works, I may state that I have found invaluable the correspondence of Lord Clive accumulated by Sir John Malcolm, and that I have consulted with great advantage Stewart's *History of Bengal*, the *Asiatic Annual Register*, Williams's *Bengal Native Infantry*, Wheeler's *Early Records of British India*, and Broome's *History of the Bengal Army*. On the last-named work I have based mainly my account of the combination of the Bengal officers in 1766.

G. B. MALLESON.

27, *West Cromwell Road*,
20*th October* 1882.

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List of Works which form the Authorities for this Volume, or which have been consulted:—


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4. "Mémoire pour le sieur Moracin, avec les pièces justificatives."
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9. Grose's "Voyage to the East Indies."
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17. Francklin's "Life of Shah Aulum."
18. Malcolm's "Life of Clive."
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23. Gleig's "Life of Lord Clive."
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ERRATUM.

Page 12, line 2 from foot, *for* "twenty," *read* "twelve."

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# THE FOUNDERS OF THE INDIAN EMPIRE.

## LORD CLIVE.

### CHAPTER I.

#### Introductory.

In the spring of 1751 the struggle between the French and English for supremacy in the Karnátak, and, generally, in the countries south of the Vindhayan range, had been all but decided in favour of the former. French troops occupied the capital, and a French general dictated the policy, of the country now ruled by the Nizám. South of the river Krishna the Governor of Pondichery, M. Dupleix, had been nominated, by the Muhammadan Viceroy of Southern India, Núwáb of the territory known as the Karnátak, and comprehending North and South Arkát, Tanjúr, Trichinápalli, Madura, and Tinnevéli. It is true that in none of those territories had Dupleix openly assumed the reins of power. That great man had,

at an early period of his career, recognised the possibility of securing a great future for France in Southern India. From the moment when, on November 4th, 1746, the French troops, led by Paradis, had completely defeated the vastly superior army of the Núwáb of the Karnátak, the establishment of French domination over India south of the Vindhayan range had become the dream of his life. Of all the Europeans who had devoted their career to India he was the first to grasp the idea. He had grasped not only the idea, but, what was of greater consequence, the one method by which it could be worked out to a successful result. It was not by a bold assertion of power, by a too patent exercise of authority, that he would strive to attain his end. It was rather by keeping his own personality in the background, whilst he allowed French influence, supported when necessary by French troops, to permeate everywhere, to be predominant everywhere, that he hoped to reap the ultimate harvest. Acting on these lines he had, by a series of skilful manœuvres, caused French influence, supported by an able general, M. de Bussy, and a small body of French troops, to become paramount at the court of the Nizám, then known as the Súbahdár of the Dakhan. Influenced by the same policy, Dupleix, although nominated, as I have said, Núwáb of the provinces south of the Krishna, had carefully refrained from exercising personal authority in any one of them. Preferring to rule by deputy, he had caused that they should be entrusted to Chanda Sáhib, a nobleman whom he had made ruler in the

teeth of the English, and who was, therefore, devoted to him.

Of the important cities in these territories Trichinápalli and Tanjúr alone resisted the rule of the French nominee. To obtain possession of Trichinápalli was an integral portion of the French scheme. Tanjúr, famous then for the vast wealth of its ruler, and the possibility of coercing which had been demonstrated by the English in 1749, would follow Trichinápalli. But Trichinápalli demanded instant action. Not only was it strong in itself, not only did it, in the hands of an enemy, constitute an open sore in the dominions of the ruler of the Karnátak, but it was at that moment held by Muhammad Ali, the rival claimant to that important territory, the claimant supported by the English.

In the autumn of 1750 the idea that Trichinápalli would constitute an obstacle to the plans of the great Frenchman had occurred to no one. The English, dazzled by the success of the policy of their rivals, were apparently too dispirited to attempt to oppose their schemes. It is true that they held Madras and Fort St. David, and that they had acquired Devikóta; but since the departure of Boscawen and his fleet (November 1749) they had ceased to devise large projects. Mr. Saunders, who, in 1750, had succeeded Mr. Floyer as governor, had been especially charged to pursue a policy of peace. The veteran commander who had on previous occasions baffled the plans of the French—Major Stringer Lawrence—was in England. The next in command, Captain Gingen, was

an officer of tried mediocrity. It was not wonderful, then, that the English, cooped up in Madras and Fort St. David, should not only take a gloomy view of the future, but should deem themselves powerless to defeat, or even to hinder, the plans of the ruler of Pondichery.

It was at this season that Muhammad Ali, deeming further resistance futile, and conscious of the fate which would certainly await him were he captured in his stronghold, opened negotiations with Dupleix. He offered to recognise Chanda Sáhib as Núwáb of the Karnátak, and to surrender to him Trichinápalli and its dependencies, on the conditions that the moneys left by his father should be restored to him, that no inquiry should be made into any of his administrative acts, and that a governing post in some other part of the Dakhan should be bestowéd upon him. Dupleix agreed to these conditions. So confident, then, was the Frenchman that no further difficulties would occur, that, without waiting for the ratification of the agreement, he carried out a measure which had been awaiting the pacification of the Karnátak, and despatched M. de Bussy and the flower of the French force to Haidarábád.

For once Dupleix allowed himself to be overreached. Muhammad Ali had no sooner heard of the despatch of the French troops to Haidarábád, than he made further demands upon Dupleix, demands of no great moment in themselves, but which required the ratification of the Súbahdár.

Whilst thus gaining a considerable respite, Mu-

hammad Ali plied Saunders with entreaties to send some English troops to aid him in the defence of Trichinápalli. He pointed out 'the enormous importance of that place as the one considerable barrier to French domination still remaining. That barrier swept away, what was there to prevent the entire supremacy of the French in Southern India? Was that an outlook which the English would care to face?

This reasoning, urged with considerable force, worked upon the mind of Mr. Saunders. It was, in fact, irresistible. He felt that two courses were open to him—to be swallowed up without resistance, or, with inferior means and no capable commander, to attempt to check the progress of the dragon. He acted as every real Englishman would under the circumstances always act. Early in January 1751 he transmitted to Muhammad Ali the assurance that he would be supported by an English force. On receiving this assurance, Muhammad Ali, who had just then received the ratification of the Súbahdár to the further conditions forwarded through Dupleix, boldly threw off the mask, and defied alike the French and the ruler of the Dakhan.

Thus it was that the possession of Trichinápalli came to be the crucial point upon which the supremacy of the French in Southern India was to depend. At the dawn of 1751 that nation had every place except Tanjúr and Trichinápalli, and the latter was apparently within their grasp. It had been promised them on conditions, and they had agreed to those con-

ditions. But during the same month of January the promise had been withdrawn. Trichinápalli defied them. The English were despatching troops to defend it. The French would have, then, to accomplish by force of arms the end which they had failed to attain by negotiations. Failure in the field alone would baffle the vast plans of Dupleix.

But failure did not seem possible. Although his most capable commander and his best *corps d'armée* were with the Súbahdár, Dupleix had still at his disposal troops more numerous than the English, and commanders who, indifferent though they might be, were not inferior to Gingen. He had all the resources of the Karnátak, and the moral force of Haidarábád, to aid him. What though Muhammad Ali and the English did defy him, his power to crush both seemed assured. He could not doubt it. No man in Pondichery could doubt it. No Englishman in Madras and Fort St. David, least of all the leader of the English troops, Captain Gingen, doubted it. It was a foregone conclusion. Trichinápalli, now to be conquered by force of arms, would become the grave alike of Muhammad Ali and the English.

No one more clearly than the French leader recognised the fact that on the possession of that place depended whether Southern India was to become permanently French. He recognised it, however, without any misgiving. He felt confident that, with the resources at his command, there could be but one result to the contest which Muhammad Ali had provoked. With the directness, then, which always

marked his policy when he had clearly before his eye the aim to be attained, Dupleix urged Chanda Sáhib to move rapidly on Trichinápalli, with a force numbering from seven to eight thousand men, aided by four hundred French soldiers, a few Africans, and some guns, under the command of Monsieur d'Auteuil. Chanda Sáhib promised to comply.

Of the plans for the campaign all but one betokened the prescience of a great administrator. The exception lay in the choice of the commander. D'Auteuil was a man naturally indolent and unenterprising. He was subject, moreover, to periodical attacks of gout. On the other hand, he was accustomed to command; he was the senior officer in Pondichery; he was equal to the Gingens and the Copes with whom it was believed he would come in contact. It was impossible for Dupleix to divine that under the Gingens and the Copes there served a man possessing a genius not inferior to his own, a genius even more comprehensive, inasmuch as it invested him with the power, wanting to himself, of personally directing the plan of a campaign, and of deciding rapidly and rightly amid the storm of bullets and the roar of cannon!

Mr. Saunders having once resolved to aid Muhammad Ali, had detached, early in the year, a force consisting of two hundred and eighty Europeans and three hundred sepoys, commanded by Captain Cope, to Trichinápalli. Their arrival at that place before d'Auteuil had even quitted Pondichery inspired Muhammad Ali with the hope that with their aid he

might gain for himself the cities to the south, held at the time for his rival.

In this hope, however, he was disappointed. An attempt made by Cope upon the important city of Madura was defeated. This defeat appeared the climax of the misfortunes of Muhammad Ali. Cope was compelled to destroy his guns from inability to carry them away; three thousand five hundred of Muhammad Ali's native troops deserted to the enemy; and at the same time news arrived of the march of d'Auteuil and Chanda Sáhib from Pondichéry. Muhammad Ali thereupon sent urgent requests to Fort St. David, imploring immediate assistance, and telling the English in the plainest language that his cause was indeed their cause, that his extinction would be the prelude to their own destruction.

The cause of Muhammad Ali was in very deed the cause of the English. Already, from the ramparts of Fort St. David the English garrison could distinguish small white flags which Dupleix had caused to be planted in every field to which he could lay claim, some of them on fields within the territory of the English Company. It was the insolence of these marks of sovereignty, writes the contemporary historian, Mr. Orme, which gave force and expression to the solicitations of Muhammad Ali, which roused the English from their lethargy, and which finally determined them to run every risk rather than allow their native ally to perish. Mr. Saunders accordingly equipped and sent into the field a body of five hundred Europeans, of whom fifty were cavalry,

a thousand sepoys, a hundred Africans, and eight guns; and placing them under the command of Captain Gingen, directed that officer to follow and watch the movements of d'Auteuil and Chanda Sáhib, but on no account to engage them until he should be joined by the troops of Muhammad Ali from Trichinápalli. Peace reigned between France and England in Europe, and it was a main object of the English to avoid the committing of any act which would make them appear as principals in the war which Chanda Sáhib was waging against Muhammad Ali. Hence the order to Gingen not to act offensively until he should be joined by the partisans of that pretender.

Meanwhile Chanda Sáhib, instead of marching directly upon Trichinápalli—a march which, under the circumstances, could scarcely have failed to finish the war—had persuaded d'Auteuil to proceed in the first instance northwards, with the double object of confirming his authority in the principal towns and fortresses of North and South Arkát, and of levying additional troops. Though he was successful in both objects, the success did not compensate for the delay which the détour caused. Though Vélúr (Vellore) and Arkát and every stronghold north of the Kolrún acknowledged the sovereignty of Chanda Sáhib, though the number of that prince's soldiers was raised from eight thousand to seventeen thousand, these advantages were dearly purchased. On arriving before the important fortress of Valkonda d'Auteuil found it threatened by an army led by the

brother of Muhammad Ali, allied with whom were the English troops under Captain Gingen.

That officer had been delayed for six weeks by the necessity imposed upon him of waiting for his native allies. It was only when he had been joined by sixteen hundred troops from Trichinápalli that he was in a position to act under the shadow of the name of Muhammad Ali. Under the potent auspices of that name he then marched upon and captured Verdachelam, a fortified pagoda held for Chanda Sáhib. Thence he had proceeded to Valkonda, a very strong fortress about ninety miles from the coast, on the high road between Arkát and Trichinápalli, and forty-five miles from the latter. He summoned this fortress, but the governor, learning that Chanda Sáhib was approaching, and not being certain as to which of the two contending parties would prove the stronger, declined the most persuasive offers. Two days later Chanda Sáhib and d'Auteuil appeared. They, too, endeavoured to coax the governor into admitting them. But towards them likewise he was inexorable. For a whole fortnight matters continued in this uncertain condition, Gingen and his allies lying encamped in a grove about a mile and a half to the south-west of the fortress, Chanda Sáhib and the French about four miles to its north, both parties using their utmost persuasions with the governor, each waiting for the other to have recourse to force. The British were the first to lose their patience. At 9 o'clock on the evening of the 19th July, Gingen marched against the place, gained the outworks, but in the end was repulsed with con-

siderable loss. The governor was so irritated at this attack that he at once admitted the French within the fortress.

The next morning, whilst the main body of the French attacked Gingen's troops, d'Auteuil opened upon them from the walls of the fortress an artillery fire so severe that, though the pieces were extremely ill-directed, the English fell into a panic and quitted the field, abandoning their native allies and leaving six pieces of cannon, several muskets, all their camp equipage and stores of ammunition, in the hands of the conqueror. Here was an opportunity to finish the war at which a great general, at which any but an ordinary general, would have clutched. Victors on the field of battle, the only army of their enemy—the few troops under Cope excepted—panic-stricken, deprived of its guns and munitions, the French had but to march straight on in the manner in which the French can march, not halting till the defeat had been turned into a complete and absolute overthrow, and Trichinápalli would have fallen—the whole of Southern India would have been secured. But, far from acting in this manner, the French contented themselves with a barren victory. D'Auteuil was suffering from gout, and there was not a single officer serving under him who possessed the spirit and capacity to supply his place. The English thus were allowed not merely to escape, but to retreat leisurely in the direction of that very Trichinápalli which it was the commission of d'Auteuil to secure.

When the next day d'Auteuil discovered the line of

retreat taken by Gingen, he followed on his track and caught him up at Utatúr, some twenty miles distant. Here an event occurred which added to the discouragement of the English troops. They were enticed into an ambuscade and suffered severely. Two days later Chanda Sáhib, having arranged with d'Auteuil that under cover of a cavalry demonstration the French infantry should make a serious attack, moved against the English camp with all his horsemen. The demonstration failed owing to the non-arrival of the French at the time agreed upon. It had this effect, however. It proved very clearly to the English commander that it would be easy for Chanda Sáhib to cut him off from Trichinápalli whence he drew all his supplies. Alarmed at such a prospect, Gingen withdrew from the ground he occupied that same night, never halting till 2 o'clock the next day, and then only when he had reached the northern bank of the Kolrún, an arm of the river Kávéri.

The river Kávéri, rising in the mountains of the Malabár coast, passes through the kingdom of Maisúr, and runs four hundred miles before it reaches Trichinápalli. About five miles to the north-west of this city it divides itself into two principal arms. The northern, called the Kolrún, finds its outlet at Devikóta; the southern retains the name of Kávéri. For several miles after the separation the banks of the Kolrún and Kávéri are in no part two miles apart; in many, scarcely one. Indeed, about a mile west of Koiládi,—a mud fort twenty miles to the east of Trichinápalli,—the two streams approach so

near to each other that the people of the country had built a large and strong mound of earth to prevent them from reuniting. The long slip of land enclosed between the point, five miles to the west of the city, where the streams first separate, and the point indicated about a mile to the west of Koiládi, is called the island of Shrírangham (Seringham), famous throughout India for the great pagoda whence it derives its name. This temple, which is very strong and of vast extent, its outer wall being four miles in circumference, is situated about a mile from the western extremity of the island, at a short distance only from the banks of the Kolrún. About half a mile to the east of it is another large pagoda, rather more than half the circumference of the other, called Jambukeshwar. There is a small village in the extreme western angle of the island, but besides this and the two pagodas there are no habitations of any importance. To complete the description, I may add that on the northern bank of the Kolrún, opposite to the space between the two pagodas, and directly facing Trichinápalli, is the fortified pagoda of Paichandah; about two miles to the east of it is the fort of Lálgudi. Of the villages and positions on the south bank of the main branch, the Kávéri, I shall speak when they come into the story.

It was to the fortified pagoda of Paichandah that Gingen had retreated. He was not, however, allowed to remain there in peace. Rapid as had been his march, Chanda Sáhib and the French had followed him as rapidly, and before 8 o'clock that night had

taken up their position within three miles of his camp. The army of Chanda Sáhib was increasing at every step. The position of Gingen on the banks of a river which at the moment was not fordable was dangerous in the extreme. His anxiety was augmented by the knowledge of the fact that it was always open to the French, whilst threatening him in front, to despatch a detachment across the river at another point, and by occupying Shríraṅgham, to cut him off from Trichinápalli. Under these circumstances Gingen resolved to fall back further. Fortunately boats were available, and he succeeded in crossing into the island almost before the French had discovered that he had moved. He did not consider himself safe even here. After a halt of two days he crossed the Kávéri and encamped under the walls of Trichinápalli. Chanda Sáhib and the French followed, took possession of Shríraṅgham, and attempted thence to bombard the city. But finding the range too great, they first captured Koiládi, then, crossing the Kávéri, they took up, on the plain to the east of the town, a position known as the French rock. Thence they opened fire on Trichinápalli.

Trichinápalli was, for the arms of those days, a place of very considerable strength. It had the form of an oblong square, the longest sides of which were the eastern and western. On the north side ran the Kávéri, less than half a mile from the northern face. The town was at that time an enclosure four miles in circumference round the foot of a rock. This rock, three hundred feet high, commanded from its summit

the country as far as Tanjúr. The town possessed a double enceinte of walls with round towers at equal distances. The ditch was thirty feet wide though not quite half as deep. The outer wall, built of stone, was about eighteen feet high and four or five feet thick. The inner wall, distant from the outer some twenty-five feet, might properly be termed a rampart. It was thirty feet high and had the same thickness at its base, the thickness decreasing in proportion as it ascended. The terreplein of the parapet had a breadth of about ten feet; and the parapet, pierced with loop-holes, was seven or eight feet high, giving a complete cover to the defenders. Some bastions were erected during the siege. The town was extremely well supplied with water by the Kávéri.

To besiege this place, to conquer its English defenders, Chanda Sáhib and the French took up the position already mentioned in the first days of August 1751. Notwithstanding the little energy which their leader had displayed, the French contingent was animated by the inspiring confidence which the following a retreating foe always creates. Had it known the change in its leadership then looming in the immediate future, that confidence would have been still greater. The position at the French rock had been occupied but a few days when d'Auteuil, incapacitated for active work, was at his own request relieved of his command. His place was filled by Law, of Lauriston, nephew of the famous Scotch financier, and the destined father of the renowned cavalry officer under the French empire.

Law had before served with distinction in India. He was young, active, ambitious, seemingly full of energy. He displayed, then, the qualities which inspire hope in soldiers. On the other hand the Engish, partly shut up in Trichinápalli, partly occupying a post about one-third of the distance between that fortress and the French camp, were utterly dispirited. The men had lost confidence in their officers, and the officers had lost confidence in themselves. Law, deeming Trichinápalli too strong to be stormed, had resolved to subject the place to a strict blockade. In his view every consideration seemed to favour the policy of such a course. Superior in numbers, commanding the surrounding country with his cavalry, occupying all the strong places in the neighbourhood, he believed that by instituting a strict blockade he could in a short time force a surrender. With ordinary care, then, the fall of Trichinápalli seemed assured.

It was when the situation was so desperate that an English gentleman, but recently attached to the army, and commanding a small detachment of men, reached the beleaguered place. The more that officer saw of its affairs the less he liked them. Discouragement reigned supreme, confidence had entirely disappeared. The position of that officer did not allow him to take prominent command at Trichinápalli, nor did he, looking about him, consider that Trichinápalli was the preferable base from which, at the moment, to commence a new departure. Something must be done, and that speedily, to prevent Southern India from becoming French. But that something must,

in the first instance, be attempted elsewhere than at Trichinápalli. So long as the besiegers were left in undisturbed possession of the cities and fortresses of North and South Arkát the French would not lose their grip on the last refuge of Muhammad Ali. The peace, then, of those districts of his must be disturbed. Chanda Sáhib must be alarmed for the safety of his household gods. Such was the thought that by degrees mastered the mind of that officer. Full of it he left Trichinápalli and proceeded to Fort St. David to lay it before the governor. His name was Robert Clive.

# CHAPTER II.

## The Early Promise.

Robert Clive was born on the 29th September 1725, in the manor house of Styche, near Market Drayton, in Shropshire. He was the eldest of thirteen children, seven of whom were girls. His father, who would appear to have been in no way distinguishable from the common run, had been trained to the law, and added to the small income he derived from the moderate property he had inherited from his elder brother by practising as a solicitor. Robert Clive's mother was a Miss Gaskill of Manchester. The estate of Styche had been held by the family for centuries. Mention is made of their name in connection with it so far back as the reign of Henry II.

From his early youth Robert Clive would appear to have displayed the same character for daring and enterprise which distinguished him throughout his splendid career. Sent, at the tender age of three, for family reasons, to Hope Hall, near Manchester, there to be brought up by a gentleman named Bayley

who had married a sister of Mrs. Clive, young Robert gave early proof of a strength of will and a resolve to display that strength—a determination on all occasions to assert himself—which rather alarmed his guardian. The method adopted by that gentleman to curb these propensities was the least likely of all to be successful. Writing to his parents when the boy had scarcely attained the age of seven, Mr. Bayley thus indicated the nature of his charge, and the mode he adopted to correct that nature: "He has just had a new suit of clothes and promises by his reformation to deserve them. I am satisfied that his fighting (to which he is beyond measure addicted) gives his temper a fierceness and imperiousness that he flies out upon every trifling occasion: for this reason I do what I can to suppress the hero, that I may forward the more valuable qualities of meekness, benevolence, and patience." Neither the bribe of the new clothes nor the "suppression of heroic qualities" had, however, the effect aimed at by Mr. Bayley. In the schools in which he was successively placed,—at Lostock, at Market Drayton, at Merchant Taylors', and finally at Hemel Hempsted,—Clive displayed the same daring nature, the same love of fighting, the same strength of will which had in his earlier years alarmed the fears of Mr. Bayley. In all these schools he made himself notorious for his dislike of serious application, and for his love of adventure, whatever its difficulty or its danger. The tradition still lives at Market Drayton how, to the terror of the inhabitants, he climbed a lofty steeple, and seated himself on a stone spout

near the summit; how he formed all the idle boys of the town into a brigade, and laid a species of black-mail on the tradespeople, compelling them to purchase the immunity of their windows by contributions of apples and of pence; how, on the crumbling away of a mound of turf by means of which his brigade was endeavouring to turn a dirty watercourse into the shop of a recusant trader, Clive threw himself into the gutter and stopped the flow of water there till his companions had repaired the damage. Qualities such as these, if they earned for him the love and devotion of his companions, alienated not less surely the sympathies of his teachers. The system indicated by his uncle in the letter I have quoted was powerless to affect his spirit. Of all his masters but one alone seems to have detected the sterling qualities which underlay the reckless and boisterous exterior. Dr. Eaton of Lostock is said to have declared that if his scholar lived to be a man, and the opportunity for the exertion of his talents were afforded him, he would win for himself a name second to few in history. But Dr. Eaton was the solitary exception. All the other masters condemned him as an idler and a scapegrace. Even his parents lost all hope of his capacity to settle down to a decent profession in the mother country. The very idea of associating his eldest son with him in his own profession, which had been the early dream of his father's life, was abandoned, as the untoward boy progressed towards manhood, as utterly impracticable. It became every year more clear that he was fitted

only for a life of adventure. Interest was therefore made for an appointment in the service of the East India Company. The application was successful, and to the relief of many minds Robert Clive was in 1743, then in his eighteenth year, shipped off to India as a writer. His destination was Madras.

The "writer" of that period had little in common with the covenanted civilian of the present day. The East India Company was then nothing more than a trading corporation. It possessed on various points of the coast of India factories and a few square miles round those factories, for both of which rent was paid to the native governments. War for offensive purposes was not thought of by the Company. They disciplined and maintained a few troops for the sole purpose of guarding the rough-and-ready forts which protected their warehouses against sudden attack. These forts were not suited for the purposes of protracted warfare. The writers were simply clerks—clerks in a large mercantile establishment. Their business was to take stock, to keep accounts, to make advances to the natives whom they employed, to ship cargoes, and, above all, to prevent any infringement of the monopoly of the Company by private traders. This was scarcely the work which would prove attractive to one who had given so many indications of a restless and indolent nature as had Clive; and when to this it is added that a writer received in the shape of remuneration a pittance so miserable that the avoidance of debt, except by the exercise of a self-denial dangerous in a country like India, was simply

impossible, we may ask with wonder what was the magic power which was likely to transform an idle schoolboy into a useful public servant; what, again, would be the attraction of a steady monotonous office-life, supported by insufficient means, to a young man possessing the daring and adventurous spirit of Robert Clive. There was not in his nature an iota of that plodding industry which enables a man to be a successful trader. And yet by private trade alone could a writer, after he had obtained a certain position, hope to amass a fortune. To a man constituted as he was, the outlook, after the inspiration caused to an adventurous nature by a contemplation of the unknown, and when he had actually realised it, must have seemed especially dark and dreary, offering but a poor compensation for exile from friends and country.

Still, *omne ignotum pro magnifico.* Robert Clive left England in 1743, and after an unusually long and tedious voyage, exceeding twelve months in duration, reached Madras in the autumn of 1744. The length of the voyage had wearied him; his stay at the Brazils and at the Cape, at both of which places his ship had remained for some months on the voyage, had exhausted his resources; the one gentleman to whom he had brought letters of introduction had left for England. Here was a situation! His enthusiasm had evaporated, he was penniless; a stranger in a strange land! To meet his earliest necessities he borrowed money, at a usurious rate of interest, from the captain of his ship! Such were the circumstances

under which Robert Clive commenced his life in India!

His first experiences in Madras neither improved his outward circumstances nor afforded solace to his wounded spirit. His pay, as I have said, was small. Though hospitality was in those early days as freely accorded as it is in our own, Clive would not take the one step necessary for its extension to himself. Unprovided with letters of introduction for any one, he would intrude upon no one. Holding himself aloof from everyone, everyone neglected him. This period was the bitterest period of his life. Soured by his isolation, uninterested by his work, having no resources in the shape of books, but few outside his house, he became irritable and desponding. His heart pined for the home he had left, for the scenes and associations of his earlier days. There at least he had associates; there he could enjoy sports, however wild, with his comrades, and exchange sympathies with kindred spirits. What a contrast did life in Madras offer! The work there was distasteful, the climate allowed him little out-door recreation, within his house he was alone! How he felt the bitterness of those early days he has himself left on record. "I have not enjoyed," he wrote in one of his letters to his relatives, "one happy day since I left my native country."

It would have mattered but little had the bitter feelings which rankled in the mind of Clive been but first impressions, to be completely effaced by more lengthened experience. From his mind those impressions were never effaced; they became ingrained in

his nature. Not only did he never forget them, but they affected him in a remarkable manner throughout his career. They caused at the time a depression of spirits akin to mental aberration, and the tendency to that depression never left him, even when in the height of his renown. On one occasion during his earlier days at Madras this depression impelled him to attempt his life. The pistol which was to have slain him missed fire. Again he pointed the muzzle at his head and pulled the trigger. Again did the pistol snap. Clive then examined it, and finding it was properly loaded, flung it away from him with the exclamation: "It appears I am destined for something; I will live."

The same haughty spirit which prevented Clive from courting the social acquaintance of his comrades asserted itself in his official life. The uncongenial work which, in common with other writers, he was set to perform, chafed him to such a degree that he was often unable to master his irritation. In one of these moods he so grossly insulted a superior functionary that the governor called upon him to apologise. Clive was forced to obey; but the humiliation, as he considered it, rankled in his breast. When, a few days later, the injured party, desirous to obliterate all recollection of the event, invited Clive to dine with him, he received a pointed refusal. "The governor," said Clive, "desired me to apologise, and I have done so; but he did not command me to dine with you."

Such were a few incidents of the earlier career of

Robert Clive. Time, however, which brings all things, gradually brought some amelioration even to his condition. The Governor of Madras, Mr. Morse, opened to him his well-stored library, and in the study of the books it contained Clive found a resource for his leisure hours. Gradually, too, he found some men possessing natures more akin to his own, with whom it was possible for him to feel sympathy, and with these he found it a pleasure to associate. In his after years he often used to allude to acts of kindness which had been rendered to him, and to the men to whom he felt himself indebted at this period. Of its more disagreeable incidents he never spoke. Still his life was not happy. If more resigned, he never became more contented; he never warmed to his work. He thought of it, spoke of it, and went to it with abhorrence. To him his career was a mistake, his youth a blunder — a mistake, too, and a blunder for which there was, apparently, no remedy! But a remedy did come, a remedy which, in its first workings, seemed worse than the disease.

In the month of March 1744 France had declared war against England. France, too, had possessions on the Koromandal Coast; of these the town of Pondichery, situated to the south-west of Madras, and distant from it eighty-six miles, was the seat of Government and the most important. The governor, Monsieur Dupleix, was a very remarkable man. To a vast and penetrating genius, to a talent for dealing with Asiatics which has never probably been surpassed, he added an ambition which, however great,

never passed the bounds of the possible attainment of its aims. But one thing was wanting to him, and it was the want of that one thing which prevented his ultimate success. He possessed the brain to devise, but not the arm to strike. He could plan a campaign, but he could not command an army. Forced, therefore, to depend upon others to carry out his projects, he had the mortification to see them crumble in the hands of incompetent instruments. Still, he was a great man and a far-seeing man. That he was the first of all the Europeans who served in India to recognise the means whereby that country might fall under the domination of one European power has been stated in a preceding page. Recognising the means, he used them unsparingly to gain the end for his own countrymen. In spite of many obstacles it is almost certain that, but for the existence of one man, he would have succeeded.

When the war between France and England broke out in 1744 the aggressive plans of Dupleix had not been conceived. It was that war, extended to India, which was to sow them, to nurture them, to bring them to complete maturity. When it broke out he was utterly unprepared for war, especially for war with England, and he dreaded it above all things. The English fleet was cruising off the coast. The nearest French ship of war was at the Isles of France and Bourbon, and although Dupleix was aware that La Bourdonnais was fitting out a squadron for the Indian seas at those islands, he had no information regarding its probable arrival. His great wish, for

the moment, then, was to induce the English authorities of Madras to agree to neutralise the Indian possessions of the two nations, to neutralise even the ships which carried on the commerce between the mother countries and their Indian dependencies.

The Governor of Madras, Mr. Morse, was unable to agree to this proposal. The East India Company had noticed with great jealousy the increasing prosperity of their French rivals in India, and they had transmitted to Mr. Morse categorical instructions to take advantage of the war, and of the squadron sent out under Commodore Barnet, to annihilate French commerce in the Indian seas. Mr. Morse was, therefore, helpless. To the pressing requests for neutrality of Dupleix he pleaded the orders he had received from England.

In those early days the European powers had never tried their strength with the forces of the native princes. The settlers on the coast were in reality the rent-paying tenants of the governors of the country in which they had been allowed to build their factories. They could not wag a finger in hostility on land without the permission of the landlord governor. In 1745 the lord, or Núwáb, of the Karnátak was A'nwaru'd-dín, appointed to that office the previous year. To Núwáb A'nwaru'd-dín, then, Dupleix, on receiving the reply of Mr. Morse, made appeal. The appeal was successful. A'nwaru'd-dín forbade his European tenants to make war by land upon each other.

For the moment Dupleix was saved. But when

the tide turned; when, in July 1746, La Bourdonnais coming from the islands had chased the English squadron from the Indian seas; when Pondichery possessed a fleet and Madras was defenceless, then Dupleix changed his tactics. Throwing to the winds the injunction of Núwáb Ánwaru'd-dín, he summoned La Bourdonnais to attack Madras. He supplied him with men, munitions, and money, and used every effort to inspire him with the ideas of French predominance in Southern India which were then, for the first time, taking root in his own mind.

La Bourdonnais was himself a man above the common herd. A great and successful administrator, he possessed to a considerable degree the power which was wanting to Dupleix—the power of action in the field. His mental vision, however, lacked the extent, the comprehensiveness of that of the Governor of Pondichery, and his great qualities were tarnished by the petty feeling of jealousy, by an unworthy desire to keep for himself the chief renown of all the achievements of his fleet—the chief credit for the plans which, though formed by others, it had been his to accomplish. This jealousy manifested itself very strongly before he had been many days at Pondichery. Finding that the capture of Madras and the expulsion of the English from Southern India were the ruling ideas which had possession of the mind of Dupleix, and that to him would belong the ultimate credit of their accomplishment, La Bourdonnais, although he had at first favoured the plan, began to make every possible excuse to avoid

carrying it into execution, and when forced, after long delays, by a citation of the Pondichery Council to attempt it, he set sail with a mental determination so to act as to thwart the great plans of the governor, whom he had begun to regard, far more than the English, as his enemy.

La Bourdonnais left Pondichery for Madras on the 12th September. He landed a portion of his troops, some six hundred in number, with two guns, twelve miles south of that place, on the 14th. On the following day, at noon, he arrived within cannon-shot of the town. He then landed a thousand Europeans, four hundred sepoys, and three hundred Africans, and summoned Madras to surrender.

Madras was in no condition to offer any effectual resistance. The fort which then protected the factories was a defensive position of the roughest character. It was simply an oblong, four hundred yards by one hundred, surrounded by a slender wall, defended by four bastions and four batteries, very slight and defective in their construction, and with no outworks to defend them. The English inhabitants did not exceed three hundred, and of these two hundred were soldiers. Their officers were three lieutenants, two of whom were foreigners, and seven ensigns who had risen from the ranks.

Under such circumstances successful defence was impossible. Governor Morse, indeed, endeavoured to obtain from Núwáb A'nwaru'd-dín the same protection which that prince had accorded to Dupleix. But he approached him unskilfully. His ambassador,

arriving empty-handed, was treated unceremoniously and dismissed with an unsatisfactory reply. Reduced, then, to his own resources, which were slight, Governor Morse agreed on the 21st September to surrender the fort and town of Madras and its dependencies. The garrison and all the English in the place, not in the service of the Company, were to become prisoners of war. All the covenanted servants of the Company were to be free to come and go as they wished, even to Europe, provided only that they engaged not to carry arms against France until they had been exchanged.

The English functionaries had given their parole to La Bourdonnais. That officer had, however, in addition to the public engagement with Governor Morse, entered into a private agreement for the ransom of the place.* This private agreement Dupleix had refused to ratify. Many of the English functionaries considered themselves as thereby released from their parole. Amongst these was Clive. Disguising himself as a Muhammadan, he fled to Fort

* I have stated the official conditions; but, by a secret agreement, signed five days later, with Governor Morse, La Bourdonnais bound himself to restore Madras on the payment of four lakhs and forty thousand rupees. There can be no doubt that La Bourdonnais was promised a bribe of forty thousand pounds as an inducement to agree to these terms. He was stimulated likewise by his jealousy of Dupleix. The whole of these transactions, culled from original documents, were first exposed by the author in his *History of the French in India* (1868). They throw an entirely new light on the, till then, received opinions regarding the conduct of Dupleix in refusing to confirm La Bourdonnais's unauthorised engagements.

St. David, an English settlement twelve miles south of Pondichery. This place now became the seat of the English administration in Southern India.

The change to Fort St. David seemed at first likely to exercise a deleterious influence on the fortunes of Clive. The place was overstocked with the officials of the Company, and there was but little occupation for him and for many others similarly situated. Reduced to idleness, and yet obliged to employ his time, Clive took to card-playing. Stories have been handed down of the coolness and resolution he displayed at this pastime, alike in unmasking a cheat, in putting down a bully, and in meeting good and bad fortune. Though to the end of his life fond of cards, especially of whist, Clive never would have become a gambler. He played for distraction in a place where he had no occupation, where books were scarce, and where at certain seasons of the year outdoor exercise to any considerable extent was impossible. Yet from the evil possibilities of such distraction he was saved by an event which, threatening in the outset to completely annihilate English interests in Southern India, changed the course of his life.

Dupleix had conquered Madras. Núwáb A'nwaru'd-dín, awaking too late to the consequences of his reply to Governor Morse's request, had ordered Dupleix to restore it. Dupleix had refused. Núwáb A'nwaru'd-dín had then despatched a force, commanded by his eldest son Máphuz Khán, to invest Madras. Upon learning this Dupleix had despatched a detachment, consisting of two hundred and thirty Europeans and

seven hundred sepoys, commanded by his most capable officer, an engineer named Paradis, from Pondichery to relieve Madras. Then occurred two events which affected in a most decisive manner the fate of the inhabitants of Hindústan. For the first time the northern warrior came in contact with the soldiers of the east. The result was premonitory of the consequences that contact was to produce. On the 2nd November the garrison of Madras, sallying, drove away the cavalry of Máphuz Khán. On the 4th, the small force of Paradis, numbering less than one thousand men, of whom only two hundred and thirty were Europeans, completely defeated the army of Máphuz Khán, ten thousand strong, on the Adyar.

This victory confirmed the ambitious views of Dupleix. Secure now of Madras, utterly despising the native soldiers as opponents, he resolved to make a great effort to complete the policy inaugurated at Madras by expelling the English from Fort St. David. Accordingly, on the 19th December he despatched a formidable army, consisting of nine hundred Europeans, six hundred sepoys, and one hundred Africans, with six guns and six mortars, against that place.

The garrison at Fort St. David numbered only two hundred English soldiers and about one hundred natives. The danger, then, was great, the emergency pressing. The most necessary want was that of human material, especially human material of European manufacture. Fort St. David was, we have seen, overstocked with civilians—of men who, for want of professional occupation, were devoting their leisure

hours to the card-table. To such men an opportunity now came, the opportunity of changing the toga for the sword, the fever of the card-table for the joys of strife—the *certaminis gaudia* of Attila—the hours of idleness for the passionate excitement of the man who feels welling up within him the proud confidence that he can lead his fellows. Foremost to clutch at that opportunity was Robert Clive. He applied for and obtained permission to transfer his services temporarily to the army; and it was in that capacity that he assisted in the defence of Fort St. David against the French.

The attack of the latter, though renewed four times, failed. In 1748, Dupleix in his turn was besieged in Pondichery. The arrival of Admiral Boscawen, with a fleet and army, had made possible this change of fortune. The besieging army invested Pondichery, and pressed it hard. With that army served Clive. There is still extant in print the journal of an English officer who was present at the siege, and in that journal is to be found the only contemporary allusion to the part taken by Clive.* Vague as it is, it proves that in the subordinate positions which alone he could have held, he showed alike courage and conduct.

* I except Orme, who used this journal as the basis for his history of the siege. It was reprinted in the *Asiatic Annual Register* for 1802. The author of it thus refers to Clive:—"The celebrated Lord Clive, then an ensign, served in the trenches on this occasion, and by his gallant conduct gave the first prognostic of that high military spirit which was the spring of his future actions, and the principal source of the decisive intrepidity and elevation of mind which were his characteristic endowments."

Dupleix repulsed the English attack. On the 17th October the army, which had begun the siege on the 19th August preceding, six thousand strong, of whom three thousand seven hundred and twenty were Europeans, aided by the most powerful fleet seen till then on the Indian seas, was forced to retire baffled and humiliated, leaving behind it a thousand and sixty-five of its numbers who had perished from the fire of the enemy, or from sickness. On the side of the defenders, Paradis, the engineer of whom I have already spoken, and Law of Lauriston, then a captain, to whom I have referred in the first chapter, had greatly distinguished themselves. But Paradis had been killed early in a sortie. After his death, Dupleix himself had been the life of the defence.

The attack had been conducted by the admiral of the fleet, Admiral Boscawen. Serving under him, in command of the company's forces, was Major Stringer Lawrence. Lawrence had arrived from England in January 1748, commissioned to command all the forces of the East India Company. He was a man of indomitable resolution, a brave and skilful soldier, capable of daring conceptions, and always ready to recognise and advance merit amongst his subordinates. He it was who had, in June 1748, repulsed the fourth and last attack made by the French on Fort St. David. At the siege of Pondichery he had not been fortunate. In the earlier days of it he had been taken prisoner in a sortie made by Law. He was released shortly afterwards in consequence of the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, the conditions of which did not reach India

till the autumn of 1749. In many subsequent operations we shall find the name of Lawrence constantly associated with that of Clive, whose military capacity Lawrence was the first to discover.

The conditions of the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle forced Dupleix to restore Madras to the English. With a bitter pang he restored it improved in every way, its fortifications greatly strengthened, the town enlarged and cleared of obstructions, the germ laid of the important place it has since become. The English, however, still, and for some time subsequently, continued to use the till then unconquered Fort St. David as the principal seat of administration. Whether they believed that the peace which had been made in Europe would be extended in all its reality to India, may, judging from their subsequent conduct, perhaps be doubted. It was not in human nature that the bitterness of feeling which had been so strongly excited should all at once subside. The five years' contest between the rival trading communities on the Koromandal coast had aroused fears, had excited jealousies, and had stimulated ambitions which, at the bid of authorities some ten thousand miles distant, could not at once give place to confidence and friendship. The peace, then, which had been made in Europe extended to India only so far as to compel in that country the restitution of mutual conquests, and to prevent the rival companies from making overt war upon each other. Events were almost immediately to prove that in all other respects it was nominal. The active rivalry of native principals soon afforded a

pretext for the renewal of hostilities. In this active rivalry the two European nations appeared as auxiliaries, always on opposite sides. Under this flimsy pretext the French and English continued, in spite of the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, to wage, as bitterly as though they had been actually at war, their contest for predominance in Southern India.

After that treaty, but before its conditions had been carried out in India, the English had (April 1749) despatched a force of four hundred and thirty Europeans and a thousand sepoys, under the command of Captain Cope, as auxiliaries to aid Sáhují, ex-Rájá of Tanjúr, dethroned and expelled for his misconduct, to recover his throne, then occupied by Pratáp Singh, an able and popular Sovereign. Such at least was its nominal object. Its real purpose was, whilst assisting Sáhují, to secure for the English possession of Devikóta, a town on the south bank of the river Kolrún, at the point where that river empties itself into the sea. The cession of this place was the prize offered by Sáhují. Clive volunteered for, and was allowed to accompany, this expedition.

It failed. The ships which conveyed the guns and the heavy baggage were dispersed by a storm. Some of them—amongst them Admiral Boscawen's flag-ship, the "Namur," of seventy-four guns; the "Pembroke," of sixty guns; and the "Apollo," hospital ship—were totally lost. The same storm swept with terrible fury the camp occupied by Cope, on the bank of the river Valáru, near Portonovo, and caused considerable damage.

Cope, however, after a halt of two days, resumed his march and entered the Tanjúr territory only to find that the prince whose cause he had come to support did not possess there a single partisan. He marched, therefore, not on Tanjúr, but upon the bait which had drawn him from Fort St. David, the important port of Devikóta, hoping to find in the Kolrún, which forms there a natural harbour, the *matériel* necessary to undertake its conquest.

In this he was disappointed. The storm had done effectually the work of the defenders. Not a ship was to be seen. Without heavy guns, without supplies, Cope was powerless to undertake the conquest of a place too strong to be escaladed. He, therefore, returned to Madras.

The debates which ensued in Fort St. David on his return demonstrated very clearly that it was not regard for Sáhují, expelled for misrule by his own subjects, but the covetous desire to possess Devikóta, which had originally prompted the expedition. Cope faithfully reported that the ex-Rájá did not possess a single partisan in the country. To interfere on his behalf, then, was out of the question. But Cope further insisted upon the enormous advantages which must accrue to his countrymen from the conquest of a strong place on the coast, possessing a natural harbour capable of receiving ships of the largest tonnage. The temptation was too great to be withstood. A second expedition was decided upon; and, that there might be no mistake this time, Major Lawrence, just released from Pondichery, was directed to command it.

The whole body of the Company's European troops, amounting, inclusive of artillerymen, to eight hundred men, together with fifteen hundred sepoys, was ordered on this expedition. Clive accompanied it, holding the temporary rank of lieutenant. In consequence of the representations made by Cope as to the difficulties presented by a march by land, it was decided to proceed by sea. Six ships, three of which were ships of war, conveyed the Europeans, whilst the sepoys accompanied them in large native boats. They arrived in safety at the mouth of the Kolrún. The troops and stores then proceeded in boats up the arm of the river which led to Devikóta, and were landed on the bank opposite the fort. Lawrence had resolved to batter the fort thence, because the other side was marshy, and he had descried the army of the Rájá of Tanjúr encamped under its walls.

The fort of Devikóta was about a mile in circumference, having six unequal sides. The brick walls, eighteen feet high, were in most parts broad enough to form a rampart without any addition of earth. They were flanked at unequal distances by towers, some circular, others square. From his position on the opposite bank of the river, Lawrence opened fire on the easternmost wall from four 24-pounders. In three days he had made a practicable breach. The enemy neither returned the fire, nor attempted to repair the breach. They employed themselves simply in carrying on an intrenchment from the bank of the river across the side of the fort which the English were cannonading.

By means of a raft contrived with great ingenuity, the English force then crossed the river. The matchlock fire of the enemy was, however, so heavy and so continued that the passage cost the lives of thirty Europeans and fifty sepoys. Lawrence found the intrenchment unfinished. Fifty yards in front of it, however, ran a deep and miry rivulet extending across the island on which the fort stands. Lawrence resolved then to cross the rivulet and to storm the breach without delay.

For the dangerous honour of leading the assault Clive volunteered. Lawrence accepted his offer and placed at his disposal a body of thirty-three Europeans and seven hundred sepoys, to be supported by the whole army so soon as the intrenchment should be carried. Clive, forming his Europeans in front, with the sepoys as a close support, crossed the rivulet with a loss of four of his advanced party. He waited a few minutes on the western bank till he should be sure that the sepoys were following, but no sooner had he seen them climbing its steep slope than he pushed on obliquely with his Europeans towards the unfinished end of the intrenchment. The sepoys, however, having clambered up the bank, far from obeying the orders they had received to follow their European comrades, remained standing, waiting for the main body. The enemy, perceiving that Clive was advancing unsupported, remained motionless till the distance had become more considerable, then, suddenly, with an evolution as rapid as it was unexpected, their cavalry, which had been concealed

behind the projections of the fort, charged the rear of his party with so much impetuosity that the men had no time to defend themselves. In less than a minute twenty-six of the twenty-nine men who still remained with him were cut to pieces. Clive himself narrowly escaped the same fate. Followed by three of his men he managed, however, to rejoin, uninjured, the sepoys who still remained drawn up, but immovable, on the western bank of the rivulet.

It was, perhaps, fortunate that the Tanjúr horsemen were content with their first success, and made no attempt to drive back the sepoys.

Meanwhile Lawrence, advancing with the main body, had reached, at the head of his men, the eastern bank of the rivulet; he crossed this, and, joined by Clive and his three followers, placed his Europeans in the front, and resumed the movement which had been so fatal to his lieutenant. He reached the unfinished part of the intrenchment molested only by an irregular fire from the enemy's matchlockmen. As he pushed on thence towards the breach, however, the Tanjúr cavalry again attempted a brilliant charge on his flanks and rear. But, forewarned, Lawrence was forearmed. Halting his men and facing them outwards, he allowed the cavalry to approach within a few yards before he gave the order to fire. The single discharge which followed that order gained the day. Fourteen horsemen were laid low; the remainder fled panic-stricken, and Lawrence, pushing eagerly forwards, found the breach abandoned by the garri-

son, who were endeavouring to escape by the opposite gateway. Devikóta was gained.

The capture, a few days later, of the fortified pagoda of Uchipúram, and its subsequent successful defence by a hundred men against a force of five thousand Tanjúrians, who tried to retake it, completed the military events of this short campaign. Causes were at work in the Karnátak which rendered the Rájá of Tanjúr anxious to conclude peace with the European invaders. They, too, were by no means unwilling to come to terms; they had gained the real object for which they had invaded the country; they had gained Devikóta. To plant upon the throne the puppet Sáhují had served all along only as a pretence to mask the real design. They were far, then, from opposing the desire of the Rájá to come to a peaceful arrangement. The wishes of the two principals in the contest thus pointing in one direction, it was easy to come to terms. A treaty was accordingly negotiated on the basis that Devikóta, with as much land adjoining it as would yield an annual income of thirty-six thousand rupees, should be ceded to the East India Company; that the Rájá of Tanjúr should pay the expenses of the war; that he should allow Sáhují a pension of four thousand rupees per annum, on condition that the English should be answerable for his person.

An analysis of the result of this little campaign cannot fail to suggest curious reflections. The English were the main gainers. They not only obtained a very important position on the coast, but they were

paid for taking and keeping it. The Rájá of Tanjúr lost that important position, but he rid himself of a rival who had been at large, and who might at any moment, in the days when force alone ruled, have become dangerous. The third high contracting party was the prince to restore whom to the throne of his ancestors the war had been nominally undertaken. Though the allies of this prince were victorious, he himself suffered, and suffered without compensation. Not only did he not regain his throne, but he lost his liberty. Under the terms of the treaty he was placed under *surveillance* at Fort St. David. The bestowal of a pittance of four thousand rupees per annum on an Indian prince, supporting even in captivity a crowd of retainers, was scarcely more advantageous to him than would be ensuring of a life-provision of bread and water to an English convict!

The treaty concluded, the English force returned to Fort St. David. Admiral Boscawen and his fleet were still at that place. The admiral was in favour of further military action. During the absence of Lawrence in Tanjúr a revolution had taken place in the Karnátak. Núwáb A'nwaru'd-dín had been slain in battle, his eldest son, Máphuz Khán, had been taken prisoner, and his second son, Muhammad Ali, had fled for refuge to Trichinápalli; Chanda Sáhib, an avowed supporter of the French, had assumed the dignity of Núwáb, and had been generally recognised. Boscawen then strongly urged action. He would have opposed an English pretender to a French pretender, have accorded strong support to Muhammad Ali, and have sent a force to

Trichinápalli to aid him. The policy advocated by Boscawen was the policy which was afterwards adopted. That admiral saw clearly enough into the future, and, detecting the aims of Dupleix, divined the only means by which it would be possible to baffle them. But the Governor of Fort St. David, Mr. Floyer, did not possess the clear vision of Boscawen. Although the latter offered to remain on the coast to support him, Floyer declined to commit the Company to the support of a pretender apparently *in extremis*. He therefore allowed Boscawen to sail (November 1, 1749), taking from him three hundred men as an addition to his garrison.

Peace then—that is, apparent peace—reigned at Fort St. David. Clive, of whose conduct during the Tanjúr campaign Major Lawrence at a later period recorded: "His early genius surprised and engaged my attention as well before as at the siege of Devikóta, where he behaved in courage and judgment much beyond what could have been expected from his years," was relegated to his civil duties. To mark the sense entertained of his services by the authorities, however, not only was he granted the rank to which he would have attained had he not been withdrawn from military duty, but he was appointed to an office which bore a certain amount of affinity to that duty. This was the office of Commissary to the troops; an easy office in times of peace, especially onerous during a campaign. Before, however, he had settled down to his new work, Clive was attacked by a fever which completely prostrated him. The air of Fort St. David

not possessing the recuperative power necessary to restore him, he was forced to take a cruise during the winter of 1749–50 in the Bay of Bengal. During his absence, I propose to relate the occurrences which gradually led to that sudden appearance at, and as sudden departure from, Trichinápalli, with which I closed the first chapter.

# CHAPTER III.

## The Darkness before Dawn.

A revolution, I have said, had taken place in the Karnátak during the absence of Major Lawrence in the Tanjúr country. Núwáb A'nwáru'd-dín had been slain in battle; his eldest son, Máphuz Khán, had been taken prisoner; his younger son, Muhammad Ali, had fled for refuge to Trichinápalli; and Chanda Sáhib, an avowed supporter of the French, had assumed the dignity of Núwáb of the Karnátak. I propose to show now the manner in which this revolution affected the fortunes of the rival European settlers on the Koromandal coast; how it fired the genius and stimulated the ambition of Dupleix; how it compelled the English to join in a struggle which was for them, in the first instance, a struggle for existence, until the military genius of Clive inverted the *rôle* played by the European rivals, and, whilst forcing the French to measures purely defensive, enabled the English to appropriate the plans for supremacy in

Southern India which had been conceived and nurtured in the brain of the illustrious French governor.

Southern India was, under the Mughuls, governed by a viceroy appointed by the Court of Dihlí. This viceroy was called Súbahdár of the Dakhan. The word Dakhan was intended to comprise, as it literally meant, the whole of Southern India; in reality it comprised only the territory now known as the dominions of the Nizám, the Karnátak, and the eastern, south-eastern, and southern portions of the coast. The western portions of the peninsula, such as Maisúr, Kuchhí (Kochin), and Travankor, though nominally comprised in the overlordship of the ruler of India, were practically independent of his rule. At the time of which I have been writing in the preceding chapter, the Viceroy of the Dakhan was Nizám-ul-Múlk. This nobleman died at the close of 1748. The Court of Dihlí appointed his grandson Muzaffar Jang, the son of a daughter, to succeed him. But Nizám-ul-Múlk had left five sons. The eldest was content to push his fortunes at the court of Dihlí; the second, Názir Jang, was an ambitious man whose life had been a succession of plots and rebellions; the third, Salábat Jang, the fourth, Basálat Jang, and the fifth, Nizám Ali, were held in little consideration. They had been content to live lives of pleasure at the court of Aurangábád.

The nomination of Muzaffar Jang, known to be a man of ability and to have been the selection of the late viceroy, was popular throughout the Dakhan. One man alone resented it. This was his uncle, Názir

Jang, whose life had been, I have said, a series of rebellions. Názir Jang would not have been true to his nature had he remained quiescent when the succession to a splendid inheritance was in question. Accordingly he rebelled.

Názir Jang had one enormous advantage; he was on the spot. Muzaffar Jang was at Bíjápúr. Názir Jang, then, seized alike the coffers of the State and the reins of government, and scoffed at the claims of his nephew.

Without money, hopeless of aid from the court of Dihlí, then in the anarchy which preceded its downfall, Muzaffar Jang bethought him of the Maráthás. He proceeded, then, to Satárah. There he met Chanda Sáhib. Chanda Sáhib was the nephew of the nobleman, Dost Ali, who had preceded A'nwaru'd-dín in the office of Núwáb of the Karnátak. Dost Ali had been slain in a battle with the Maráthás in 1739. One of the consequences of this defeat had been the siege of Trichinápalli, held by Chanda Sáhib, by those warriors. Chanda Sáhib, hardly pressed, had been forced to surrender that place in 1740. Subsequently to that time he had lived a prisoner at Satárah. In the meanwhile the Karnátak had passed out of the hands of the family to which he was allied. The only son of Dost Ali, and his successor, had been murdered. Chanda Sáhib, upon whom, had he been free, the Núwábship would certainly have devolved, was, we have seen, in confinement at Satárah. The government of the Karnátak had been bestowed upon the representative of another family, the Núwáb A'n-

waru'd-dín. It remains alone to add that Chanda Sáhib possessed considerable ability and boundless ambition. His ability, however, was rendered useless, and his ambition was thwarted, by a waywardness, an indecision of character, a fear to strike less the blow should fail, sufficient to spoil the best laid plans.

The claims put forward by Chanda Sáhib as the heir of Dost Ali rendered him the very man to suit Muzaffar Jang. This prince was captivated alike by his ability and by his ambition. He could not see, then, that though skilful to devise plans, Chanda Sáhib would be weak in carrying them through. The two men agreed to work together for a common aim. The aim was to secure the yiceroyalty of the Dakhan for Muzaffar Jang, the lesser office of Núwáb of the Karnátak for Chanda Sáhib.

Muzaffar Jang hoped to carry out this aim by means of the Maráthás. Indeed, it was with that sole object that he had proceeded to Satárah. But Chanda Sáhib knew the position too well to think for a moment that either of them could procure a permanent rule over a Muhammadan province by means of warriors who brought destruction and desolation in their path. His device was less grandiloquent, but more sure. He had had great experience of the French; he had at a very early period detected the physical superiority of the western race. His plan, then, was personal liberty and an alliance with the French. With this object he entered into a correspondence with Dupleix, and obtained both.

This was in 1749. On the 3rd August of that

year, whilst the English were still in the Tanjúr country, Muzaffar Jang, who had raised thirty thousand men, allied with Chanda Sáhib who had six thousand, and who was aided by four hundred Frenchmen commanded by d'Auteuil, under whom served Bussy, attacked the army of Núwáb A'nwaru'd-dín at Ambúr. The battle was decisive. A'nwaru'd-dín, in the act of singling out Chanda Sáhib for a hand-to-hand encounter, was shot through the head; one of his sons, Máphuz Khán, was taken prisoner; the other, Muhammad Ali, saved himself by an early flight; the entire army dispersed in confusion. The victory had really been won, not by the levies of the two Indian leaders, but by the French led by Bussy, for d'Auteuil was wounded early in the day.

It was, I have said, decisive. Arkát surrendered the next day. In that capital Muzaffar Jang proclaimed himself Súbahdár of the Dakhan, Chanda Sáhib Núwáb of the Karnátak. The two governors then proceeded to Pondichery to cement the alliance with Dupleix. Muzaffar Jang stayed there eight days. During that time he conferred upon Dupleix the sovereignty of eighty-one villages immediately adjoining the French territory. At the expiration of ten days he rejoined his camp twenty miles from Pondichery. Chanda Sáhib continued his stay in that city.

The battle of Ambúr had produced the revolution which more than anything else had induced the Rájá of Tanjúr to come to terms with the English, and

which had impelled Admiral Boscawen to offer to stay longer on the coast. In the first moments of that victory the Governor of Fort St. David, Mr. Floyer, had despatched an accredited agent to Chanda Sáhib to acknowledge him as Núwáb and to congratulate him on his accession. But when he saw that Chanda Sáhib prolonged his stay from day to day, from week to week, at Pondichery; when not only every week but every day brought him a despatch from Muhammad Ali assuring him of his ability to hold Trichinápalli, and from thence to reconquer the Karnátak, if only he would send a few English to aid him, even Mr. Floyer began to ask himself if he had not acted too hastily in acknowledging a prince so devoted to the enemies of his country. Admiral Boscawen strongly urged him to declare for Muhammad Ali and to aid him with soldiers. But Floyer was cautious. The chances of Muhammad Ali seemed too slender to rest upon. He determined, then, to wait the course of events. That course was precipitated by the consequent departure of Boscawen and the English fleet.

It was for that departure that Chanda Sáhib and Dupleix had been waiting; they dared not move whilst Boscawen remained. No sooner had he left than Chanda Sáhib, furnished by Dupleix with funds and troops, left Pondichery with the avowed intention of marching with Muzaffar Jang upon Trichinápalli.

Had he carried out that intention nothing could have saved Muhammad Ali, nothing could have prevented the unquestioned supremacy of the devoted

friend of the French over the Karnátak. But Chanda Sáhib did not carry out that intention. In consultation with Muzaffar Jang, and without even communicating with Dupleix, he resolved to attempt, in the first instance, the conquest of Tanjúr. The proverbial riches of that place were the fatal snare which diverted him from the true point of his game. That game was dominion. He had the winning card in his hand, and he threw it away!

The allied army of Muzaffar Jang and Chanda Sáhib, accompanied by the French auxiliaries commanded by Duquesne, arrived before Tanjúr the 9th November (1749), and summoned it to surrender. The Rájá not only refused, but sent messengers to Názir Jang and to the English imploring their aid.

Both the parties appealed to saw at once the advantage which the deviation from sound principles of war had thrown into their hands. The resistance which Tanjúr, strong in its fortifications, strong likewise in the resolution of its Rájá, could undoubtedly offer, would give the English time to send a detachment to join Muhammad Ali in the defence of Trichinápalli; would enable Názir Jang to march upon his enemy's communications. Both the parties seized eagerly the opportunity. The English, on the first intimation that Chanda Sáhib and his allies had taken the road to Tanjúr, had despatched Captain Cope at the head of a hundred and twenty men to Trichinápalli. Of these Cope could not spare more than twenty for Tanjúr. But he judged, and judged rightly, that twenty brave soldiers might inspire to a

stern resistance men fighting behind stone walls. He sent those twenty, therefore, to Tanjúr, and they, taking advantage of a dark night and the carelessness of the besiegers, entered the place. The English at Fort St. David and Názir Jang did more. They came at once to an understanding by virtue of which the former bound themselves to assist Názir Jang with six hundred European troops in maintaining his own pretensions to the viceroyalty of Southern India, and in asserting the claims of Muhammad Ali to the Núwábship of the Karnátak.

The resolution and diplomatic skill displayed by the Rájá of Tanjúr, combined with the characteristic indecision of Chanda Sáhib—who directed the military operations of the besieging force—to favour in a remarkable manner the views of the English. By the display of those qualities the Rájá for some weeks amused Chanda Sáhib with promises of surrender. When these ceased to have their effect, when after a siege of fifty-two days Chanda Sáhib had carried one of the gates of the town and the place lay apparently at his mercy, the Rájá again amused him by affixing his seal to a treaty which he had no intention of carrying out. He promised to pay to Muzaffar Jang and Chanda Sáhib seven hundred thousand rupees; to the French two hundred thousand rupees; to remit the ground-rent paid by the latter for their factory at Kárikál, and to add eighty-one villages to that factory. But by delaying the payment on the plea of making a detailed valuation and assessment of the plate, the jewels, and the precious stones which

were to take the place of the money he had agreed to pay, he gained time for Názir Jang to enter the Karnátak. The intelligence that that prince was marching on Tanjúr encouraged the Rájá to throw off the mask. He boldly tore up the treaty, and bade the besiegers be content with the small amount he had doled out to them. Dupleix all this time had been unremitting in his recommendations to Chanda Sáhib not to content himself with promises, but to march into Tanjúr. The faithless conduct of the Rájá led him to insist the more earnestly upon this course. But by this time Chanda Sáhib's game had been played out. Alarmed by the report that Názir Jang was marching on their rear, his soldiers refused to engage themselves in narrow streets, every house in which would be a fortress. The French contingent was equally demoralised. Their leader, Duquesne, had died; his successor, Goupil, was a cypher; the men had been short of supplies and had received no pay, for the French, too, had trusted to the treasures of Tanjúr. Divided counsels and their offspring, confusion, reigned rampant everywhere. Suddenly, without orders, without preconcerted action, the sections of the besieging army broke up, and fell back upon Pondichery.

Meanwhile six thousand native horsemen and Cope's detachment of a hundred men had escorted Muhammad Ali to join Názir Jang at Valdáur, fifteen miles from Pondichery. Lawrence, who had been sent to Madras to receive that place from the French, had returned to Fort St. David, and had been engaged in organising there a force which should act in concert

with the native allies of the English. Up to the time of the French retreat from Tanjúr he had not stirred from that place. Prevented by the peace existing between the two nations from acting on his own account, he was waiting the next move of Názir Jang.

Názir Jang, for his part, was awaiting at Valdáur the next move of his rival. He had not long to wait. The force which had fallen back dispirited and humiliated on Pondichery, found at that place the invigorating influence which the genius of a great man is always able to inspire. Dupleix saw that for his friends to be successful they must strike boldly, fiercely, and immediately. He advanced money from his own coffers, he increased the French contingent to two thousand men, replaced Goupil by d'Auteuil, and pointing in the direction of Valdáur, bade the two native chiefs seek there the accomplishment of their wishes.

On learning that the enemy was marching on Valdáur, Lawrence set out from Fort St. David and joined Názir Jang with six hundred men. The next day the enemy came in sight and began a cannonade. A decisive battle was apparently imminent. The morrow came, and with it a decisive result, not the consequence, however, of a battle worthy of the name. The French contingent mutinied and refused to fight. Panic-stricken, the followers of the two native princes fell back on Pondichery. One of these princes, Chánda Sáhib, accompanied his followers; the other, Muzaffar Jang, threw himself on the tender mercies of his uncle. The next day some detachments of the army

of Názir Jang pursued the French and their allies to the walls of Pondichery itself.

This misfortune, apparently overwhelming, was only a prelude to a greater success. In three or four days the discipline of the French army was restored. On the 13th of April a detachment of it surprised and dispersed an outlying force of Názir Jang's army greatly inferior in numbers. A few days later it captured the strong pagoda of Tiruvadi, only sixteen miles from Fort St. David and almost within sight of the army of Muhammad Ali. On September 1st Chanda Sáhib and d'Auteuil attacked and completely defeated the army of that prince, twenty thousand strong, on the Ponnár. In this battle the French did not lose a single man. It was decisive in its results. It virtually gave to Chanda Sáhib the Karnátak; it actually restored to the French the ascendancy they had lost by their retreat from Valdáur. Muhammad Ali, followed by two attendants, fled for refuge to Arkát.

This victory was improved by the storming, a few days later, by a small French force under Bussy, of the fortress of Jinji, till then considered impregnable. This event enabled the French to strike a decisive blow at Názir Jang himself. Muzaffar Jang, a prisoner with his uncle, and loaded with irons, had managed, nevertheless, to win over to his own cause some of the leading chieftains in the army. With them, and in correspondence with De la Touche, the French commander at Jinji, it was arranged that the appearance of a French force marching to

attack the main army should be a signal for the release of Muzaffar Jang and the deposition of his uncle. The arrangement was literally carried out. On the night of the 15th December the French commander, M. de la Touche, set out from Jinji at the head of eight hundred Europeans, three thousand sepoys, and ten guns in the direction of the Súbahdár's camp. After a march of sixteen miles he found himself, at 4 o'clock in the morning, in front of twenty-five thousand men bent on opposing him. These, according to the preconcerted plan, he attacked. Meanwhile, the conspirators had shot Názir Jang through the heart. Muzaffar Jang, whose death had been ordered for that very day, was released and saluted as Súbahdár. De la Touche had but just broken the twenty-five thousand men opposed to him when the new ruler, displaying the French standard, appeared on the field. That same evening Muzaffar Jang commissioned the French commander to inform Dupleix that he would act in all things in conformity with his advice.

The turn of fortune in favour of the French did not stop there. The Governor of Fort St. David, Mr. Floyer, had been ordered to return at once to Europe. Pending the arrival of his successor, Mr. Saunders, the office had devolved upon Major Lawrence. That capable soldier was then forced to withdraw from the army, leaving the force in the field under the command of Cope, a man of very moderate ability. That was not all. Major Lawrence's health had suffered very much from the trials and exposure to which he had been

subjected. Instead, then, of resuming his place at the head of the army on the arrival of Mr. Saunders, he was forced to proceed on leave to Europe. The new governor, Mr. Saunders, possessed common sense and good abilities, but he had no military experience. Clive, too, all this time was endeavouring to recover his health in the Bay of Bengal. In the presence of the sudden aggrandisement of their rivals the fortunes of the English traders seemed at a low ebb indeed.

But the drama which was to be acted ere the curtain should rise for the re-appearance on the stage of Robert Clive had not yet been played out. There was to be another tragic scene. After his triumph near Jinji, Muzaffar Jang proceeded to Pondichery, where he was received with great honours. There, in full durbar, he nominated Dupleix Núwáb of the country from the south of the river Krishna to Cape Kumárin (Comorin), with Chanda Sáhib as his deputy; he conferred upon Dupleix the greatest dignity of the Mughul empire, that of a mansab or commander of seven thousand horse; he granted to him likewise lands bringing in an annual income of one hundred thousand rupees, and he confirmed the French in possession of all the lands and forts they had held and conquered, returning an annual revenue of four hundred thousand rupees. He then concerted with Dupleix a plan for united action, a prominent feature of which was that a body of French troops, commanded by a French officer of rank, should accompany him to his capital, and should permanently remain there.

After a short stay at Pondichery, Muzaffar Jang set out for Haidarábád, accompanied by a French contingent under Bussy. But the turbulence and avarice of the vassal chieftains who had murdered Názir Jang had not yet been satiated. Those chieftains now expressed discontent with Muzaffar Jang, because he had not placed at their disposal a larger portion of the contents of his uncle's treasury. They conspired, therefore, against him, and incited a tumult on the march, in the quelling of which they hoped to slay their intended victim. When the mutiny broke out Muzaffar Jang showed more courage and resolution than prudence. Calling on the French infantry to follow him, he charged the rebels with his cavalry. One of the chief conspirators was killed, a second was mortally wounded. Pursuing the third, Muzaffar Jang himself was slain (6th February).

This event, which might have proved fatal to the views of the French, was at once turned by Bussy to their advantage. The third son of the uncle of Muzaffar Jang was on the spot, though in confinement. Bussy at once, with the concurrence of all the chiefs of the army, proclaimed him Súbahdár of the Dakhan, released him from confinement, escorted him to Haidarábád, and received from him not only a public confirmation of all the grants of territory made to the French, but the cession, in the vicinity of Machhlípatanam (Masulipatam), of others, which formed the first stepping-stone to the acquisition of the province subsequently known as the Northern Sirkárs.

Such was the position of affairs in Southern India,

when there occurred those events which I have related in the first chapter. French interests were everywhere in the ascendant. Represented by Dupleix and his agent, Chanda Sáhib, they reigned supreme in the Karnátak; represented by Bussy and the prince whom he had raised from a prison to a throne, they reigned supreme throughout the Dakhan. The pretender—for such only could he be regarded at the time—whom the English supported, Muhammad Ali, fleeing to Arkát after his defeat on the Ponnár, had escaped thence, without a single follower, to Trichinápalli, where he had still a few adherents.

The English, deprived of the skilful leadership of Lawrence, had, as we have seen, first (early in 1751) despatched a small European force under Cope, to aid in the defence of Trichinápalli; and, a few months later, a larger one, five hundred strong, under Gingen, to frustrate the intentions of Chanda Sáhib and d'Auteuil. How Gingen was baffled; how, defeated at Valkonda, he had been pressed back on the Kolrún; how, forced to retreat from the Kolrún to Trichinápalli, he had allowed that place to be invested by Chanda Sáhib and the French; how depression had taken possession of the spirits of the English garrison; how, when everything seemed dark and desperate, there had suddenly appeared upon the scene an Englishman, who, taking in at once all the points of the situation, conceived in his own brain the plan whereby the designs of the enemy might be baffled, success substituted for defeat, and confidence for despair; how that Englishman had at once started to Fort

St. David to lay his plans before the governor, Mr. Saunders, has been told in the first chapter. It is time, then, that we should return to Robert Clive.

# CHAPTER IV.

## The Dawn of Genius.

Clive returned from his search for health in the Bay of Bengal invigorated by the sea-breezes and completely restored to energy. He at once resumed his office of Commissary to the troops. It was the cold season of 1751. His duties had become more active. In the early part of the year he had superintended the equipment of Cope's force of two hundred and eighty Europeans and three hundred sepoys, destined for Trichinápalli, and at the end of March he accompanied, as Commissary, the force of five hundred Europeans, a hundred Africans, a thousand sepoys, and eight guns, directed to march under Gingen upon Valkonda, and, co-operating with Muhammad Ali, to endeavour to thwart the operations of Chanda Sáhib and of d'Auteuil.

Clive was with Gingen's force when it was beaten at Valkonda. As Commissary, he was precluded from taking an active share in the operations, and as no credit would have accrued to him from Gingen's

success, so he can in no way be held responsible for his failure. It may be assumed, indeed, that he disapproved very strongly of the manner in which Gingen conducted the campaign. On no other hypothesis is the decided course he adopted after the defeat at Valkonda to be accounted for. Instead of accompanying Gingen in his retreat towards Trichinápalli, he resigned his office, and returned to Fort St. David.

That the germ of the actual plan, which his subsequent visit to Trichinápalli fully developed, was already in his mind may well be surmised. Certain it is that in his intercourse with the governor he dwelt repeatedly on the ease with which the enemy might be made to tremble for his possessions in the north if troops only were available to attempt a diversion. But troops were not yet available, and Mr. Saunders knew that those who might be expected to arrive from England would be required for other purposes. Besides, he had not at his disposal a single officer of experience. Clive was but a civilian; his genius for command had not been recognised. Above all, there devolved upon Mr. Saunders the imperative necessity of sending the first troops that might arrive to escort a convoy of provisions urgently required at Trichinápalli.

The fortunate arrival of the Company's ships from Europe enabled him to carry out this resolve. A force of eighty Europeans and three hundred sepoys was despatched at the end of July with a large convoy of stores for the purpose. In the absence of

experienced military officers, Mr. Pigot, a Member of Council, was deputed to proceed with the force until it should be beyond the risk of hostile attack. He was then to return to head-quarters. Clive volunteered to accompany Pigot.

From Fort St. David to the fortified town of Verdachelam, a distance of between thirty and forty miles, the road traversed the territory of a petty chief, or poligár, known to be hostile to the English. For the remainder of the journey little was to be apprehended, the Rájá of Tanjúr being inclined to favour the English.

The detachment reached Verdachelam unmolested. Having accompanied it so far, Pigot and Clive set out to return under a slender escort of twelve sepoys. But the poligár, who had shrunk from attacking a convoy escorted by Europeans, did not hesitate to make a dash at this small guard of sepoys. Surrounding them with his matchlockmen, he harassed their march for miles, keeping upon them a continuous fire and killing seven men of the escort. The efforts which produced this result had, however, exhausted the ammunition of the assailants, and the two English gentlemen were able to reach their destination in safety. The detachment they had escorted to Verdachelam reached Trichinápalli in due course.

The arrival of more troops from England enabled Mr. Saunders a little later to detach another small body of men to reinforce the army under Gingen. This time the status of Clive was definitely decided. He renounced for ever the Civil Service of the Com-

pany, received the commission of captain in its army, and was directed to proceed, with the small detachment at the disposal of Mr. Saunders, to Devikóta, there to place himself under the orders of the officer commanding that post, Captain Clarke, and to accompany him to Trichinápalli. The force, when augmented by Captain Clarke's detachment, would consist only of a hundred Europeans, fifty sepoys, and one small field-piece. Clive set out in the middle of July, reached Devikóta, was joined there by Clarke, who then led the force to Trichinápalli, baffling an attempt made by a detachment of thirty Frenchmen and a crowd of native levies, sent out from Koiládi, to bar the road.

Clive found affairs at Trichinápalli as bad as they could be. It was not only that the place was invested by a very large native force, aided by nine hundred Europeans flushed with success; it was rather the condition of the garrison that alarmed him. He found Muhammad Ali in despair, his treasury exhausted, and no source open to him whence to supply it; his soldiers demoralised. He found the European soldiers in scarcely a better position. They had, as I have said, lost all confidence in their officers, and, with the exception of two or three, the officers had lost all confidence in themselves. Clive undoubtedly felt that it would still be possible for a daring leader to re-awaken the enthusiasm of the men. But where was such a leader to be found? Not, certainly, in the unenterprising Gingen, or in the plodding but mediocre Cope, the two seniors in the army. Even

supposing that he himself, untried, could have roused such a feeling, the way to attempt it was barred. Could the two leaders have been put aside, there were others who would have refused to take presumed ability upon trust to the detriment of their own pretensions. A civilian lecturing soldiers upon tactics! Such, in the eyes of officers, would have been the position of Clive! We all know how, in the present day, such an assumption of superior knowledge would be received. And men's natures, especially the natures of soldiers, were not very different then.

To remain at Trichinápalli, a powerless witness of the gradual process which would cause the power of his countrymen to wither, and ensure the supremacy of his country's rivals, would, for a man with the pent-up genius and ardent nature of Clive, have been under any circumstances impossible. It was the more impossible, under the actual circumstances, inasmuch as he felt that if English interests in Southern India were to be saved at all, the salvation must come from outside. It could be brought from outside, moreover, only by a man possessing the genius which could conceive, could initiate, and could carry out the one plan which alone could assure success. That man must possess many qualities. He must be one who should combine brain-power with a daring and active nature; who should possess a mind which could envisage every possibility, and yet would shrink from no danger; a spirit whose resolution should be steady, firm, immovable; a nerve to be daunted neither by actual peril, nor by that which to many is still

more appalling—by possible peril; and finally, by a physique which could stand fatigue and climate, which could forego sleep and defy privation. A man so constituted would command the one influence still wanting to ensure success—the enthusiasm of his men.

Strongly impressed with the conviction that all was yet possible, and determined to use every effort to be allowed to work out himself the idea which could yet save British interests, Clive, after a few days stay at Trichinápalli, returned to Fort St. David. On his arrival he hastened to press upon Mr. Saunders those convictions the germ of which had been conceived when Gingen had been beaten at Valkonda, and which had now taken absolute possession of his mind. Many circumstances had combined to render his task of persuasion easier than it had been on the previous occasion. He had, in the interval, acquired the confidence of at least two members of the Council; he had shown that he could act, that in danger his spirit never faltered; that he possessed at least some of the qualities of a leader of men. Mr. Saunders, too, though not a man of brilliant parts, possessed the rare virtue of being able to appreciate great qualities in others. It had probably occurred to him more than once, subsequently to the return of Clive from Valkonda, that in despatching two small detachments to reinforce the garrison at Trichinápalli he had increased the difficulty of provisioning that garrison, at the same time that he had deprived himself of resources in men who might be more usefully em-

ployed. Thoughts such as these must have prepared him to consider favourably the plan which Clive on his return from Trichinápalli, now invested and suffering, boldly laid before him.

That plan was to surprise and capture the capital of North Arkát whilst the ruler of that territory should be encamped with all his available soldiers before Trichinápalli. Such a diversion could not fail to alarm, possibly to paralyse, men who had shown themselves feeble and hesitating, too timid to dare, even when victory was in their grasp. It was a plan which required prompt execution and daring leading.

The credit due to Mr. Saunders and his Council in acceding to it can scarcely be over-rated. The garrisons of Madras and Fort St. David had been raised by recent reinforcements to three hundred and fifty Europeans. These constituted the last resource of the English in the event of a mishap at Trichinápalli. Could Mr. Saunders then, with prudence, lessen by one-half the garrisons of the two main possessions of the British in Southern India, and despatch the larger moiety on an expedition against the capital of the prince of whom he was legally nothing more than the vassal—an expedition which, if it were to fail badly, must entail the ruin of the interests which he had been sent from England to guard? To whose command, too, was the expeditionary force to be entrusted? To the command of a man who but yesterday was a civilian, and who, though he had served with troops, had never held a military command in the field!

Many a man placed in the position of Mr. Saunders would have hesitated. Many more would have rejected the idea with scorn. But Mr. Saunders did neither. The idea was not new to him. He had had time for reflection. He had witnessed the failure of the ordinary modes of procedure. He had come to believe in Clive. He agreed, then, to his plan, massed all his available troops, except a hundred men reserved for Fort St. David, at Madras, and sending Clive thither, bade him leave fifty behind as a garrison, then, taking all that remained, put into execution the promptings of his genius!

# CHAPTER V.

## Arkát.

On the 26th August 1751 Clive set out from Madras at the head of a force composed of two hundred European troops, three hundred sepoys, and three small field-pieces. These troops were led by eight European officers, six of whom had never been in action; indeed, four of the six were young men in the Civil Service, who, inflamed by Clive's example, had volunteered to follow him. Marching at no extraordinary rate, Clive reached, on the morning of the 29th, the considerable town of Kánchipuram (Conjeveram), forty-two miles from Madras. Here he obtained the first trustworthy intelligence regarding the garrison and defences of Arkát. He learned that the garrison outnumbered his own troops by more than two to one; that the defences, though incapable of withstanding an attack made with heavy guns, might be maintained by a resolute enemy against an army unprovided with such material. To be ready for every emergency Clive at once despatched a

messenger to Madras to request that two 18-pounders might be sent after him. But he did not wait for them. He had still twenty-seven miles to accomplish. Despite of a terrific storm accompanied by thunder and lightning, not uncommon in India in the rainy season, he marched those twenty-seven miles in the two following days, and arrived on the 31st in front of Arkát, the capital of the province to the northern division of which it gave its own name. Fortune greatly favoured him, as she so often favours those who are daring and self-reliant. The garrison, which, at the very least, might have opposed to him a resistance long enough to enable Chanda Sáhib to send a force to relieve it, shamefully abandoned the fort in a panic. The fort abandoned, the city was incapable of offering resistance. Clive then took possession of both without firing a shot or striking a blow. In the fort he found large quantities of lead and gunpowder and eight pieces of cannon.

Great as was this success, Clive was not content with it. He reasoned, and reasoned correctly, that to maintain the impression of superiority which he had already produced, it was necessary to do something more than occupy the capital; it was necessary that his presence should make itself felt in the surrounding country; that he should strike such a blow as would permit the retreating garrison to justify to their own consciences their retrograde movement. Always careful to provide against any possible emergency, Clive first stored up provisions within the fort, in the event, the possibility of which loomed before

him, of his having to stand a siege. He then marched (4th September) with the greater part of his forces against the enemy. He found them the same afternoon, to the number of six hundred horse, five hundred foot, and one field-piece, near the mud fort of Tímari, six miles south of Arkát. The appearance of Clive seriously alarmed them; and having ascertained that a few discharges at a long distance from their field-piece would not stop him, they fell back in disorder to the hills behind Tímari, covered by their cavalry.

Clive had no care to follow them; but learning, two days later, that they had returned in greater numbers to Tímari, he determined to dislodge them from a place whence they could not fail to menace his communications. On the 6th, then, he marched again against the fort. He found the enemy, to the number of about two thousand, with two field-pieces, drawn up in a grove within gunshot of the fort. This grove was not only enclosed by a bank and ditch; some fifty yards in front of it was a large tank likewise enclosed by a bank much higher than that of the grove. It must be understood that to the advancing English the tank was behind the grove, and that it formed a sort of *enceinte* into which the defenders could retire when driven out of the latter. The tank was dry.

It was Clive's first command in the field against an enemy who resisted him. The enemy's position was strong, and they outnumbered the attacking party by about five to one. They soon showed, too, that they

meant resistance. Clive, in the fashion which he knew must always succeed when adopted by Europeans against Asiatics, moved straight on towards the grove. As he advanced a discharge from the enemy's two field-pieces killed three of his men. This untoward event, far from checking their progress, only made it more rapid. The result was that which ever has been, which always will be, under similar circumstances. The enemy evacuated the grove and took refuge in the tank, the high banks of which effectually screened them against the English fire. Seeing this, Clive resolved to carry the tank by a double attack, made simultaneously from opposite sides. The attack succeeded. The two parties despatched on this mission gained the opposite banks and delivered their fire on the crowded numbers within at the same moment. Their action was decisive. The enemy fled in disorder.

Clive then occupied the village and summoned the fort. But the commandant, hesitating to gain time, soon discovered that Clive had no battering-train, and refused to surrender. Clive, unable to attempt the place till his 18-pounders should arrive, returned then to Arkát.

There he remained for ten days engaged in throwing up defences and in strengthening and victualling the fortress. The enemy, seeing him no more in the open field, gathered heart and, to the number of three thousand, encamped within three miles of Arkát, giving out that they intended to besiege it. Clive allowed them to indulge in vapourings of this character till they began to take for a settled belief

that which had been originally but a vain and empty boast. When they became so confident of success as to be careless of guarding their camp, Clive sallied out at midnight (14th September), surprised and dispersed them.

Meanwhile the two 18-pounders for which Clive had sent to Madras had been despatched under a small sepoy escort, and were approaching Kánchipuram. To intercept these the enemy sent a strong detachment to take possession of the strongly fortified pagoda in the vicinity of that town, and this detachment they gradually but largely reinforced. Clive, who had at first contented himself with sending a small body of Europeans to strengthen the escort of the heavy guns, felt it now necessary to support it with his whole available force. Retaining, then, only thirty Europeans and fifty sepoys within the fort, he detached the rest of his troops to meet the convoy. The enemy, learning this, changed their plans, and, massing all their troops, made a desperate attack upon Arkát during the night. Though made and repeated with great resolution, the attack failed. Early next morning the convoy arrived: the enemy at once dispersed.

It may here be noted that if, when Clive first appeared before Arkát, the enemy had displayed an energy and activity at all corresponding to that which they subsequently manifested, Clive would have been baffled. A little resolution would have saved that important place; the want of it changed the face of the campaign. Modern warfare supplies many

instances of similar consequences, proceeding from similar causes. The result of the campaign of 1814 would have been entirely changed had the commandant of Craon maintained that place for forty-eight hours instead of allowing himself to be intimidated into immediate surrender.

To return now to Chanda Sáhib.

The news of the capture of Arkát produced all the effects which Clive had anticipated upon the besiegers and the besieged of Trichinápalli. It alarmed and irritated the former; it brought hope and friends, and with hope and friends confidence and exultation, to the latter. Muhammad Ali had been previously engaged in endeavouring to persuade Murári Ráo, the famous Maráthá chief of Gutti, and the Rájá of Maisúr (Mysore), to declare in his favour. These had made preparations to take the field, but it was certain that upon the success of Clive's romantic march it depended whether they would draw their swords for, or against, Muhammad Ali. The capture of Arkát decided them. The same successful achievement influenced, also, the Rájá of Tanjúr, and a personage scarcely less important, the Poligár of the territory known as Pudukóta, south of Tanjúr, between that kingdom and Madura, to declare in his favour. The importance of these adhesions, especially of the two last, can scarcely be over-estimated. They secured the English communications with the coast, and enlisted on their side men able to afford them active co-operation alike in the procuring of supplies and in service in the field.

Nor was the effect less visible on the besiegers.

Chanda Sáhib was the first to recognise the extent to which their *morale* would be weakened and their prospects endangered. With all his faults of laziness and hesitation the Núwáb whom Dupleix delighted to honour was a man of considerable natural ability. He immediately set himself to put in action the only means at his disposal for repairing the evil. At all costs, Arkát must be recovered. Continuing to prosecute the siege of Trichinápalli, he would despatch a sufficiently strong force to retake the fortress which Clive had seized. He had such a force at his disposal. Its success would more than dissipate the existing discouragement. The retaking of Arkát would place his affairs on a vantage ground higher than ever, for it would dispose of the last resources of the English. As for the native allies of Muhammad Ali, they would, he knew, always take care to be on the side of the victor. Full of these thoughts, and sustained by these hopes, Chanda Sáhib delayed not a moment, but despatched at once three thousand of his best troops to join in the vicinity of Arkát the forces which his son and heir, Ríza Sáhib, disposed of in its neighbourhood. Reinforced by a hundred and fifty Frenchmen, this besieging army would number, without counting the rabble, about five thousand regular troops. To watch its operations the eyes of the contending parties bent now with an anxiety not to be described. The fate of Southern India seemed to depend upon the result of the siege, now about to be undertaken, of Arkát.

The fort of Arkát was not very capable of offering a prolonged defence to an efficient besieging army. Somewhat more than a mile in circumference, its walls were, in many places, in a very bad state of repair; the rampart was narrow, the parapet low, the ditch was in some places fordable, in others dry, in others choked up. Between the ditch and the foot of the wall was a space about ten feet wide, intended for a fausse-braye, but it had no parapet at the scarp of the ditch. The bastions, or, more properly, the towers which served for bastions, were, for the most part, in bad repair, and not capable of mounting more than one piece. The fort had two gates, one to the north-west, the other to the east. These gates were formed of huge piles of masonry, projecting forty feet beyond the walls of the fort, and they were connected with the interior by a causeway crossing the ditch. The fort was, so to speak, connected with the town by houses in its immediate vicinity—a manifest inconvenience to its defenders, as they formed *points d'appui* to the besieger. During the three weeks he had occupied Arkát, Clive had endeavoured to repair and strengthen the place; but time had been wanting, other duties had devolved upon him, and he had only been very partially successful. His force had during that time suffered considerably, and, when Ríza Sáhib appeared before the walls, it was reduced to a hundred and twenty Europeans and two hundred sepoys. His eight officers had been diminished by one-half. He had stored up provisions for sixty days. Of water there was a sufficient supply in the reservoir

within the fort. It was in the power, however, of the besiegers, at the outset, to deprive him of this supply. The reservoir communicated, by an aqueduct laid underground, with a tank outside the fort. The existence of this aqueduct was known to very few; but, amongst those few, to a mason employed for years within the fort. This man gave timely intimation to Clive, and thus enabled him to take measures to render the communication inoperative.

On the 23rd September 1751, Ríza Sáhib and his allies took up a position before Arkát. Their battering train had not, however, arrived, and for the first twenty-one days they were forced to content themselves with pouring from the covered roofs and upper rooms of the houses they had at once occupied, near the fort, a continuous fire of musketry, aided by a constant discharge from four mortars. Clive, whose men had suffered greatly in a sortie, made on the 23rd, from the musketry-fire from the houses overlooking the streets they had to traverse, and who, on the night of the 24th, had had the mortification to witness the failure of an attempt he had directed to blow up the houses nearest to the fort, was forced, during this period, to husband the lives of his soldiers with the greatest care. To guard them as much as possible from the effects of a musketry-fire from commanding positions so close to his own, he had directed that, with the exception of the few men necessary to keep watch and ward and to prevent surprise, no one should appear on the ramparts. But, notwithstanding this precaution, his men suffered

severely. The enemy, feeling themselves secure from injury, displayed a remarkable coolness and self-possession. They soon acquired so great a perfection in matchlock-firing, that the appearance of a head above the parapet was an almost certain prelude to the death of the man to whom it belonged. Exposures of this sort, often inevitable, caused considerable losses to the defenders. Clive himself, however, seemed to bear a charmed life. He exposed himself necessarily more than any other individual of the garrison. With but four officers at his disposal, he was forced not only to think but to see for himself. But even in the first three weeks of the siege Clive had many narrow escapes. On one occasion a sepoy, aiming at him point blank from a window close to which he was standing, was induced to divert his aim from Clive to an officer who, divining his intention, had endeavoured to pull his leader on one side. The officer was killed. On three other different occasions sergeants who had accompanied him on his visits to the works were shot dead at his side. He alone remained untouched.

The siege had continued three weeks, and Clive was weaker by the loss of several of the garrison, and by the consumption of one-third of his supplies, when, on the 14th October, the French troops serving with Ríza Sáhib received from Pondichery two 18-pounders and seven pieces of smaller calibre. The exultation of the besiegers was now extreme. Up to that moment they had carefully abstained from any attempt against the fort, contenting themselves with endeavouring to

kill or disable as many as possible of its defenders. Now, for the first time, they possessed weapons of offence against its ramparts, weapons which should open to them a way of which their superior numbers could not fail to take advantage. At once, then, they placed in position their new acquisitions, and, establishing a battery to the north-west, opened fire. The French gunner had laid his piece so well, that the very first shot dismounted one of the 18-pounders in the fort; the second entirely disabled it. The defenders at once mounted their second 18-pounder to reply to and, if possible, to silence the French battery. But this met with a fate nearly similar to the first. It, too, was dismounted, and thenceforward it was used only on those parts of the defences which were not exposed to the enemy's guns.

Flushed with success the besiegers continued their fire, and with so much effect that in six days they had demolished the entire wall between the two towers on the face opposite to their battery, making a practicable breach of fifty feet. Clive was not insensible to the extreme gravity of the position—a position which, in a military sense, rendered Arkát untenable. But, far from losing confidence, he took upon the spot measures which, commanding as he was men whom, though few in numbers, he had himself trained to war, and who had acquired the most absolute confidence in his leading, he deemed would yet prove effective. He threw up works to defend the breach; he caused two trenches to be dug—one immediately under the rampart, the other at some short distance behind it.

These trenches he filled with sharp iron three-pointed spikes, called crows' feet, connected both their ends by means of palisadoes up the rampart with the parapet, then pulling down to the height of a breast-work the wall of a house still further in the rear, he made of this a defensive position, whence the defenders could fire on the assailants when they should be entangled with the spikes in the ditches.

Of the three field-pieces which he had brought with him, he planted one on a tower which flanked the breach without, two he kept in reserve, whilst he placed two small guns, which he had found within the place on its capture, on the roof of a house within the fort commanding the breach.

It was fortunate for Clive that the besiegers gave him ample time to complete all these preparations. An enemy alike prudent and daring—for in war the terms are almost always synonymous—would have attempted the breach as soon as it had been made. Ríza Sáhib, however, appeared satisfied with having made it. The fact is that whispers of the defensive measures, which had been commenced the very day his batteries had opened, had reached that leader. Reports always gain in transmission, and Ríza Sáhib did not like the outlook. Then, again, he believed that time was with him. He knew pretty well the state of the supply department within the fort. Instead, then, of risking a repulse before defences which he believed to be even stronger than they were, he resolved to make a second breach on the opposite side of the fort. He could thus utilise his vastly superior numbers, and

make two assaults at the same moment. With this view he caused a battery to be erected to the south-west, and removed to it his now sole remaining 18-pounder, the other having burst, and a 9-pounder.

Meanwhile, Clive had not been remiss in endeavouring to communicate with the outer world. His native emissaries, who served him well, as such ever have served, and will ever serve, a master to whom they pledge their faith, had penetrated to Fort St. David, to Madras, even to Trichinápalli. Preparations to relieve him were being made in the vicinity of the last-named place by those allies of Muhammad Ali whom Clive's own action had roused from lethargy. From Madras reinforcements had actually set out. Mr. Saunders had received more troops from Europe, and, deeply imbued now with the spirit which Clive had aroused within him, this able and resolute man had ordered their prompt despatch to Arkát.

The detachment formed of these troops, consisting of a hundred Europeans and a hundred sepoys, set out from Madras about the 20th October, under the command of Lieutenant Innis. Three days later it reached Trivatúr, twenty-two miles to the south-east of Arkát. Here Innis was attacked by a large body of troops, with two guns, detached by Ríza Sáhib to intercept him. If Innis had had any guns, he might still have held his own, and even more than his own. As it was, the contest was too unequal; and though the English leader and his men displayed great courage, and even succeeded for a moment in driving the enemy from their guns, they

were forced to retreat on Punamallí, thirteen miles from Madras, with a loss of twenty Europeans and two officers killed, and many more wounded.

Thus was this attempt frustrated. An overture made by Clive to an independent chieftain who had declared for Muhammad Ali seemed, however, to promise more favourable results. This chieftain was Murári Ráo, the famous Maráthá chief of Gutti referred to in a previous page. A warrior and freebooter by profession, Murári Ráo had made himself famous not less for his own daring courage and audacity than for his appreciation of those qualities in others. He cared nothing for the cause for which he fought. He had originally allied himself with Muhammad Ali because it suited his plundering instincts that disorder should reign outside his own small territory in the Karnátak. Having no intention, however, of provoking the vengeance of Chanda Sáhib, he had performed the duties of an ally in an extremely perfunctory manner. But the march of Clive on Arkát, his success at Arkát, had roused his more generous instincts. The stern defence of Arkát pleased him still more. He felt then—he himself recorded—for the first time convinced that the English could fight.

Murári Ráo was under this conviction when the messenger of Clive reached him. He lay then, at the head of some six thousand men, at the foot of the mountain-plateau some thirty miles to the west of Arkát. The messenger found him in the humour to grant everything to a man who had displayed such

daring and courage as had Clive, and brought back a promise of immediate aid.

It was impossible that the dispositions of such a man as Murári Ráo should remain long a secret. Probably, indeed, the same day which saw the message conveyed to Clive witnessed the receipt of a report of it by Ríza Sáhib. That leader had meanwhile been pushing for six days his attack on the south-west face of the fort. The wall was crumbling before his guns, and the breach was daily widening. That, at such a time, Murári Ráo, the most daring of partisans, should attempt a diversion in favour of the besieged, was a possibility the very thought of which filled Ríza Sáhib with anxiety. He resolved, then, to attempt to try the effect of negotiation. With this view he, on the 30th October, sent to Clive, under a flag of truce, a proposal that he should yield Arkát.

He offered the garrison honourable terms, and to Clive himself a large sum of money. In case of refusal, he threatened to storm the fort and put its defenders to the sword. To this proposal Clive returned an answer so full of defiance that Ríza Sáhib felt that, regard being specially had also to the activity likely to be displayed by Murári Ráo, his only hope of gaining Arkát lay in the carrying out of the alternative he had proposed.

The Maráthás, indeed, had begun (9th November) to show themselves in the vicinity of the place. Innis's party, too, reinforced to a strength of a hundred and fifty Europeans, with four field-pieces, and commanded by Captain Kilpatrick, was advancing from

Punamallí. Ríza Sáhib employed, then, every effort to increase the dimensions of the second breach.

On the fourth day that breach had attained a width of thirty yards. But the difficulties in the way of a storming-party were greater here than at the other breach. Whilst this face had been equally provided with defences, the ditch in front of it was full of water and unfordable.

But the breaches were practicable, and delays were dangerous. It happened, too, that a religious festival, which never fails to excite the followers of the Prophet Muhammad to enthusiasm and even frenzy, fell that year on the following day. The omen, the day, the pressing danger from without, combined to determine Ríza Sáhib to attempt the place early in the morning. He prepared his measures accordingly. He caused four storming-parties to be told off, two to advance against the gates, two to enter by the breaches. The movement was to take place at 3 o'clock in the morning, and the signal was to be the firing of three bombs.

Clive, throughout the siege, had been well served by spies. They did not fail him on this occasion. On the 13th he learned that the storming was to be attempted; at midnight he was informed of the dispositions made by the enemy, of the hour of the attack, of the signal for its commencement. Reduced as was his garrison now by sickness, wounds, and other causes to eighty Europeans and a hundred and twenty sepoys, he was ready. Visiting the posts, and giving his final instructions, he lay down to

catch a little sleep before the curtain should rise on the last scene of the drama of the siege.

At 3 o'clock in the morning he was roused by the signal. Jumping up, he visited the posts, found his men on the alert, listening with calmness to the noise made by the excited stormers as they advanced. These first attempted the gates. To force them the enemy had placed in front of their advance elephants with large plates of iron attached to their foreheads. They had believed that the weight of these huge animals would crush down the barriers to their entrance. The defenders, however, poured upon this forlorn hope a musketry-fire so continuous and so well-directed that the elephants turned and fled, trampling upon their human supports. Meanwhile, another division of the enemy had marched with great resolution towards the north-west breach, the ditch before which was fordable. They crossed the first trench, filled with iron crows' feet, before the defenders pulled a trigger. But no sooner had they completed the passage than the defenders poured in a volley, and, not waiting to load, repeated it from spare muskets lying beside them, whilst the guns opened a continuous fire upon the crowded multitude before them. The effect was electric. The first attack was at once repulsed. The same fate befel a second and a third. The enemy then fell back, their enthusiasm evaporated, their confidence changed into utter despair.

A scene not very dissimilar was at the same time occurring on the south-west face. There the ditch in front of the breach was not fordable. The stormers,

therefore, carried with them a raft, upon which, when launched, some seventy of them embarked. The raft had almost gained the fausse-braye, when Clive, who happened to be directing the defence at this point, observing that the aim of the gunners who manned the two field-pieces placed for the defence was bad, took upon himself the management of one of them. So accurate was the lay of his piece, that three or four discharges produced a confusion on board the raft great enough to upset it. This misfortune baffled the attack on that side.

One hour had now elapsed. The enemy's losses had been considerable. Amongst those who had fallen was the commander of the storming-party, a man whose conspicuous valour had been remarked by the defenders. The loss of the rank and file was computed at four hundred, almost all natives, as the French had entirely held aloof from the attack. Of the defenders four Europeans had been killed and two sepoys wounded.

No army in the world suffers more from the effects of a repulse than a purely Indian army. The military history of India is a history of lost opportunities, of opportunities thrown away because either one particular combination had been baffled, or the success obtained had not equalled expectations. The siege of Arkát is one example out of many of the truth of this axiom. Taking no account of the fact that he still counted twenty men to the defenders' one, that in the number of European troops alone he doubled them, Ríza Sáhib lost heart from his first repulse, and resolved to raise the siege. He covered his inten-

tions by resuming, two hours after his men had fallen back, a strong musketry-fire from the houses near the fort. At 2 o'clock in the afternoon he asked leave to bury his dead. This rite concluded, he resumed at 4 o'clock the musketry-fire, and continued it till 2 o'clock in the morning. It then suddenly ceased. Under cover of this fire he had raised the siege and marched in the direction of Vélúr (Vellore).

Thus ended the memorable siege of Arkát—a siege unique till then in the history of sieges, never surpassed, and rarely equalled, for the display of energy, of foresight, of courage on the part of the defenders. To find a parallel to it in India the reader has to cast his eyes forward for the space of more than a century till they rest upon Lakhnao and 1857. The cases are in many points very similar. In both, a small garrison was beleaguered by overpowering numbers; in both, successful defence appeared to the besiegers impossible; in both, the vicinity of houses greatly interfered with the defenders; in both, defences had to be thrown up under the fire of the enemy; in both, the defending sepoys showed loyalty to their European master. But there the parallel ends. Slight and insufficient as were the defences of Arkát, they were magnificent when compared with the low walls of the beleaguered Residency. If the garrison of the latter exceeded in number the defenders of Arkát, so also did the assailants. In the case of Lakhnao, too, a small European garrison was defending itself against an army in revolt, against a nation in arms; but in 1751 it was simply a duel

between two native claimants, the cause of one of whom had been espoused by the English. No national feeling had been evoked, no caste hatred had been inspired.

In 1857 the English fought for their own hand, and all India knew it. In 1751 they fought avowedly for the native prince of whom they were the tributaries. Splendid, then, as was the defence of Arkát, magnificent and far-reaching as were its results, it was yet to be surpassed, a century later, by another noble achievement performed by scions of the same race in another province of the same empire. That second achievement proved at least this, that a century's progress in arts and science had in no respect caused the race of the defenders of Arkát to degenerate.

To return. As the morning of the 25th November broke, Clive discovered that the siege was raised, that his enemy had disappeared. He at once marched into their abandoned camp and found there four guns, four mortars, and a large quantity of ammunition. There, too, he met, marching towards the fort, Captain Kilpatrick's relieving detachment of a hundred and fifty Europeans and four guns. His joy was immense. It was not caused, indeed, by the fact of his own safety and the safety of his men: it may be taken for certain that that consideration never for a moment occupied him. His mind took a far wider range. The repulse of Ríza Sáhib had changed the fate of the Karnátak: it had sealed the fate of Chanda Sáhib: it had inverted the position of the European auxiliaries of that prince and of those of

Muhammad Ali. It may, perhaps, be doubted whether the dream which had inspired the actions of Dupleix—the dream of domination in Southern India—entered at this moment into the brain of Clive: but it can only be a doubt. It is certain that his genius, now thoroughly roused, saw all the possibilities before him. His prompt action, and the action of the Government which he inspired, showed how thoroughly he and they understood the altered circumstances of the case. Time and fortune were to show how far it would be expedient to use those circumstances for the benefit of the nation, whose children, the actual masters of the situation, yet technically occupied only the position of being the auxiliaries of a native pretender to the government of the Karnátak!

But his joy was immense. After a siege of fifty days he had beaten back a native force largely outnumbering, aided by a European force greatly superior to, his own. Though in that siege he had lost forty-five Europeans and thirty sepoys killed, and though a considerably greater number had been wounded, his casualties had been more than supplied on the very morrow of the repulse. His enemy, abandoned by his tributaries, had fallen back with a largely diminished force, baffled and humiliated, upon Vélúr. This at least was certain: he had North Arkát in his hands. With North Arkát in his hands, what hope, what vestige of a chance would remain for Chanda Sáhib, besieged as he would be, in his turn, before Trichinápalli?

The immediate action of Clive proved how

thoroughly he had comprehended the situation. Ríza Sáhib had fallen back on the 15th. On the 19th, Clive having made everything secure in Arkát, left that place in charge of Kilpatrick, and marched out at the head of two hundred Europeans, seven hundred sepoys, and three guns. Taking Tímari, the little fort which before the siege had baffled him, he returned towards Arkát to await the arrival of the thousand Maráthá horsemen promised him by Murári Ráo. These in their march to join him had been roughly treated by Ríza Sáhib, and, their object being plunder rather than glory, they showed themselves when they did arrive little amenable to the purely military considerations which influenced the movements of the English leader. It is probable, indeed, that Clive would have found it impossible to induce them to march against Ríza Sáhib for the simple purpose of inflicting upon that prince a defeat not to be followed by plunder. But just at the critical moment, when the last persuasions of Clive had failed, certain information reached the camp of his allies that Ríza Sáhib, in the expectation of being reinforced on the way by a party from Pondichery, was marching on A'rní. Rumour, too, added that the troops who composed the reinforcements were bringing with them large sums of money. This rumour effected a complete revolution in the minds of the Maráthás. They were now as eager, as before they had been disinclined, for an attack.

A'rní lies seventeen miles south of Arkát, twenty south of Vélúr. An army marching upon it from

Vélúr must then expose its flank to a force encamped near Arkát. Clive saw, then, his opportunity. Taking advantage of the favourable disposition of the Maráthás he gave orders to march at once. But many of his allies had departed on plundering expeditions. The endeavour to recall them caused much regrettable delay. Even when Clive was able to set out, but three-fifths of the Maráthá horsemen had returned to their colours. The consequence of the delay was that Ríza Sáhib met his reinforcements; and when Clive, after a forced march of twenty miles, approached A'rní, he came in sight of the enemy composed of three hundred Europeans, two thousand horsemen, and two thousand five hundred sepoys, with four field-pieces, just preparing to cross the river which runs to the north of that place. The enemy caught sight of Clive at the same moment, and their leader, noting the considerable superiority of his force, turned at once to meet him.

The superiority in numbers was considerable. Clive had under him two hundred Europeans, seven hundred sepoys, six hundred Maráthá horse, and three guns. The odds against him were more than three to one. But Clive was the successful defender of Arkát! That one fact gave him a prestige which more than counterbalanced the great superiority of numbers. There has been a fashion recently amongst some classes to sneer at prestige. Prestige works on soldiers as the reputation of a lofty sense of honour works on a man, or purity of soul and elevation of thought on a woman!

Clive did not decline the combat. The ground seemed to him advantageous to receive an enemy. He occupied an open ground flanked on the right by a village, on the left by a grove of palm-trees, there being a space of about three hundred yards between the two; in his front were rice-fields, very swampy at that time of the year and impracticable for guns. The fields were crossed, however, by a causeway which led to the village on his right.

That village was thus the key of the position. In it Clive posted his sepoys, in the palm-grove on his left the Maráthá horsemen, whilst he drew up the Europeans and guns on the open ground between the two.

His dispositions had just been completed when the enemy came on. Their cavalry, interspersed with whom were infantry, advanced against the grove, whilst the French troops, about fifteen hundred sepoys, and the artillery, marched along the causeway against the village.

The cavalry in the grove was first engaged. The contest here was for a long time even. The Maráthás, however, failed, in spite of repeated charges, to stop the enemy's advance, and it is probable that they would have been forced to fall back but for the movements in the centre and on the right. Whilst the combat on the left was yet doubtful, the enemy had begun the movement against the village on the English right which was to decide the battle.

The march of a considerable body of men along a narrow causeway, the end of which formed almost an acute angle with a plain bearing on its surface

hostile guns, was not a movement to be undertaken without considerable risk. And yet that was the movement to which Ríza Sáhib and his French auxiliaries committed themselves. Clive used it as a great captain always will use such an opportunity. He concentrated on the long spun-out line of the enemy the fire of his guns. The effect was decisive. The enemy's infantry, their long flank exposed to the artillery fire, hesitated, halted, then, a few only excepted, fell back in confusion, and, quitting the causeway, formed up in the rice-fields fronting the plain, almost touching with their right as they did so the grove where the cavalry were still fighting. Their guns, however, still remained on the causeway, protected by a few Frenchmen and natives. This was the crisis of the battle. Clive instantly turned it to his advantage. Sending two of his guns and some fifty Europeans to the grove to support the Maráthá cavalry, now hard pressed and alarmed by the advance, as they regarded it, of the enemy's infantry, he directed a similar number of his Europeans to join the sepoys in the village, then to dash on to the causeway and charge the enemy's guns. This movement decided the day. On the first appearance of the column on the causeway the enemy hastened to fall back with their guns. Their example was followed by the infantry in the rice-fields, and theirs, again, by the cavalry attacking the grove, already dispirited by the execution made by the two English field-pieces. Clive, not satisfied with a mere repulse, used all his efforts to convert it into a rout. Whilst the Maráthá cavalry

followed the enemy, he, traversing the causeway, pursued them with relentless vigour with his infantry. At three places they made a stand, but at each in vain. Night alone put a stop to the pursuit. The result was a fit sequel to the defence of Arkát. It proved that Clive was as much to be feared in the field as behind defences. The battle was gained, too, with but little loss. Whilst fifty Frenchmen and three times that number of natives were killed or wounded, Clive lost only eight sepoys and not a single European. About fifty of his Maráthá allies were killed or disabled.

The effect of the victory was, I have said, a fit sequel to the defence of Arkát. Whilst the latter had placed the northern province of that name at the mercy of Clive, the victory of A'rní virtually gave him possession. It not only caused Ríza Sáhib's army to disperse, it induced many of his soldiers to enlist in the ranks of the victors. The pursuit, continued the following day by the Maráthás, secured for those marauding warriors the military chest they had coveted; whilst the Governor of A'rní, though he refused to admit the victors within the walls of his fort, agreed to hold it for Muhammad Ali, and surrendered, nominally for his use, the effects, the elephants, and the horses of his rival.

Ríza Sáhib's army having dispersed, Clive moved with celerity on Kánchipuram (Conjeveram), the strong pagoda of which had been seized during the siege of Arkát by a French garrison of thirty Europeans and three hundred sepoys, who still held it.

The place was very strong, but the enemy had no guns. Clive blockaded it till two 18-pounders should arrive from Madras; these soon caused the walls, strong as they were, to crumble; and the enemy, seeing the impossibility of a long resistance, evacuated the place in the night.

This result obtained, Clive, placing a strong garrison in Arkát, returned to Madras and thence to Fort St. David. The business in the northern province had been so effectually done that it behoved him now to see how the blow could be made to affect Trichinápalli. The defence of Arkát and the combat of A'rní, however much they might have affected the *morale* and caused to diminish the energies of the besiegers of that place, had not yet forced them to relax their hold. Something more was required, and what that "something" should be must be concerted with Mr. Saunders. Meanwhile North Arkát was, he believed, fairly secure. But, considerable as was the knowledge which Clive had acquired of the modes of warfare of the natives of India, he had not at that time fully comprehended them. He had yet to learn how it was possible that the army of an enemy might be defeated in the field, and in consequence be completely dispersed; how apparent tranquillity would at once reign over the surface, previously greatly agitated; how it might seem possible to dispense safely with the presence of the chief who had gained that victory and made that pacification; and how, notwithstanding, on the morrow of his departure, though he might depart almost unattended,

armies would rise out of the ground, and the tranquillity of the province be again terribly disturbed.

Before I relate how that experience came to Clive, I must ask the reader to return for a moment to Trichinápalli, and see how the actors before and in that place had been affected by the events which had happened in the province of North Arkát.

# CHAPTER VI.

## Kávéripák and Trichinápalli.

The action taken by Clive in marching upon and capturing Arkát, whilst it had surprised and vexed, had not disconcerted the great Governor of Pondichery. Recognising the genius which had inspired it, Dupleix yet saw, and saw most clearly, that if the instruments at his disposal would only execute with all possible vigour the plans he had given them, the chances were still greatly in his favour. It was by pressing the siege of Trichinápalli that he could neutralise, and more than neutralise, the efforts of Clive in North Arkát. Trichinápalli once conquered, the losses sustained in that province would be restored almost of themselves. Far, then, from allowing the action of Clive to disturb him, Dupleix did not permit it to alter a single plan. Feeling that Trichinápalli was the decisive point, he sent thither more European reinforcements and a battering train, at the same time that he urged upon his general, Law, and upon Chanda Sáhib, the pressing necessity of bending all their energies to

capture Trichinápalli, without allowing the state of North Arkát or any other consideration whatever to interfere with that most important object.

These orders display the genius of the man who issued them; his mastery of the situation, his clear perception, his wonderful prescience. Thenceforth it was a duel between the two great rivals, a duel in which the Englishman possessed this great advantage, that whilst he could himself set in action the thoughts which his brain had conceived, the Frenchman was compelled to use instruments often incapable of carrying out his plans; whilst Clive could trust to himself, Dupleix could not depend upon others.

So it happened now. It had not been in consultation with him that Chanda Sáhib had detached a large portion of his force to besiege Clive in Arkát. His letters and messages had alike borne this refrain: "Take Trichinápalli, then you can suppress this daring Englishman." But when Chanda Sáhib, urged by his fears, did weaken himself to retake Arkát, Dupleix had sent a small body of Europeans to aid the detached force, in the hope that, so strengthened, it might detain Clive sufficiently long in the northern province to allow, meanwhile, of the capture of Trichinápalli. Whilst so acting, however, he pressed alike upon Law and Chanda Sáhib the absolute necessity of doing all in their power to hasten the fall of that place. To bring about that result no risk would be too great. For him, then, if only his orders were obeyed, it was possible to hope everything: the chances were still enormously in his favour. The one

essential was a hand which could carry out his well-conceived plans. But he did not possess that hand. Law, of Lauriston, who commanded before Trichinápalli, was a brave man. His services at the defence of Pondichery, when that place was besieged by Boscawen, had been so distinguished that it was permissible to hope everything from him as a commander in the field. But he was not fit for independent command. He was one of that unhappy type of men who, greatly superior in intellect to the ordinary run of their fellows, mar the best-laid schemes by their inability to arrive at a decision. Law held the mental balance between so many courses that he generally ended by allowing matters to drift, or by carrying out a plan which he knew to be defective. His hesitations, his doubts, his mental perplexities, made him—a brave and clever man—a most incapable commander, the one of all others the most unfit to carry out the plans of Dupleix.

And yet the splendid administrative ability of that great man had given him opportunity upon opportunity to carry out those plans. Dupleix could not bestow upon him the mental force to say "I will," but he had given him everything else. Law stood before Trichinápalli at the head of a European force such as, till then, had never been seen in India. He had nearly nine hundred trained French soldiers, and two thousand disciplined sepoys. Encamped beside him, and virtually subject to his orders, was the army of Chanda Sáhib, nearly twenty thousand strong, and abounding in horsemen. He had, moreover, a park

of fifty guns, many of them of a large calibre. Within Trichinápalli were the few soldiers of Cope and the personal adherents of Muhammad Ali. Without its walls, encamped between them and the besiegers, was the English force led by Gingen—dispirited men led by a dispirited captain. Against such a force Law had but to dare—in order to gain Trichinápalli. One attack would have annihilated Gingen, and with the defeat of Gingen the place, pressed vigorously, must fall. Law, however, though urged on all sides, by Chanda Sáhib as well as by Dupleix, did not dare. At a moment when prompt action was necessary, he, unable to decide how to attack, contented himself with maintaining a rigorous blockade.

This inactivity was fatal to him. Muhammad Ali had, in the early part of the year, by a promise to cede to the ruler of Maisúr Trichinápalli and all its dependencies as far as Cape Kumárin—a promise which he had no intention of carrying out—secured the active co-operation of the Dalwai of that kingdom, Nanjíráj Urs. That prince had now arrived in the vicinity of the place at the head of an army of five thousand cavalry and ten thousand infantry. With the exception of a small portion of its component parts, a thousand strong, commanded by Haidar Naik, subsequently known to the world as the famous Haidar Ali, this army was in no respect formidable. But every week's delay, adding to the prestige of Clive, brought other enemies of the French into the field. The Rájá of Tanjúr sent five thou-

sand men under his general Morají; the Poligár—better known as the Tondiman Rájá—sent seven hundred to co-operate with the army of the Dalwai. A little later in the same year a party, smaller in number but more formidable from the character of its leader, Yúnas Khán—a partisan serving under Murári Ráo—joined the army formed to harass the besiegers.

Still, up to the end of 1751, neither the allies of the besieged nor the besiegers had effected great things. There had been skirmishes, in which losses of life had occurred and prisoners had been taken on both sides. In one of those skirmishes Cope had been mortally wounded, and his death and the repulse of the party he commanded had rendered Gingen more than ever unwilling to engage in hazardous enterprises. Though entreated by his allies outside to attack the besiegers, that officer, feeling that though an attack might succeed, it might fail, and that its failure would entail the loss of Trichinápalli, wisely declined the risk. The French were conducting their attack with so little vigour, the fire of their cannon produced results so slight, that he felt he could wait until the authorities at Fort St. David should be able to make a diversion in his favour. Such a diversion he might expect, in the ordinary course of events, in the beginning of 1752.

Reasoning on the supposition that events would take their ordinary course, Gingen reasoned correctly. In December 1751 Clive had returned to Fort St. David; the annual provision of troops from England

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might be expected soon to arrive there; and there seemed every expectation that early in 1752 Clive would set out at the head of a force to measure his strength with the French besiegers of Trichinápalli. But in war the unforeseen often happens. Dupleix had watched with the keenest anxiety alike the movements of Clive and the inaction of Law before Trichinápalli. He had received with incredulity, with despair, even with agony, the excuses furnished by the latter for his unenterprising conduct—these excuses being always accompanied by the assurance that in a very few weeks the want of supplies for the garrison must force a surrender. It can well be imagined how that despair and that agony increased when the month of December verged towards its close, and Dupleix heard that Clive had returned to Fort St. David and was making preparations for an expedition which must upset all the calculations of Law and ruin all his plans. But in this crisis the Frenchman showed himself to be the great man he really was. He had one card left, but it was a trump card. He played it. Ríza Sáhib, after his defeat at A'rní, had fled to Pondichery. His name had still influence in North Arkát. That province having been evacuated by Clive, would Ríza Sáhib, with a force newly equipped, endeavour to recover all that had been lost? To such a question made to a man still smarting under all the insult of defeat, there could be but one answer. Whilst, then, Clive, at Fort St. David, was making preparations for a Trichinápalli campaign, Ríza Sáhib, at Pondichery,

was plotting an insurrection in the province Clive had but just quitted. The necessity of suppressing this at once would, argued Dupleix, give one more chance to Law, and this chance he would use all his endeavours to compel him to turn to the best advantage.

The insurrection broke out, opportunely, in January 1752. Well planned, it went very near to achieving a decisive success. Ríza Sáhib, with some four thousand native troops, supported by four hundred French auxiliaries, marched on Punamallí, took it, then, after ravaging the country near Madras, seized on the fortified pagoda of Kánchipuram (Conjeveram). From this advantageous point he threatened alike Arkát and Madras. Dupleix was anxious that he should crown his work by making a dash at the latter. Had the French troops possessed a Clive as their leader, this bold stroke would have been attempted, and would have succeeded. But the allied force was a body without a head. It wanted the impulse of a firm direction. It did everything except attack Madras. It burned down the houses ouside the fort, it levied contributions within the Company's territories, it carried terror to the very coast; but it did not strike the one blow which might have changed the fortunes of the campaign.

Still it effected much. It so far answered the purpose of Dupleix that it procured time for Law, it forced Clive to divert his thoughts and intentions from Trichinápalli to the province of North Arkát.

Clive, in fact, was at Fort St. David making

preparations for a decisive campaign against the French besiegers of Trichinápalli, to be undertaken as soon as the annual supply of troops should arrive from England. Ríza Sáhib's burst into the province of Arkát, took him entirely by surprise. For a moment it seemed to disconcert him. He had not an available man at Fort St. David. An enterprising enemy could in a few weeks more than destroy his work of the previous autumn. But the feeling of depression, if it existed at all, was but momentary. Clive felt, as all great men on trying occasions always do feel, that, small as were his resources, he was there to give them a force and a vitality more than sufficient to neutralise the numerical superiority of his enemy. He had eighty men in Madras; a hundred, sent for from Bengal, might arrive at any moment; and he had two hundred in Arkát. A little time, a little want of energy on the part of the enemy, and the game was still his own.

We have seen how the enemy played that game for him. Had they attacked and taken Madras, had they even recovered Arkát, it would have required much precious time even for Clive to redeem the position. But when he saw them do everything but strike, he felt he had them. He had given them nearly a whole month, and they had wasted it!

Clive reached Madras early in February, and pending the arrival of the garrison of Arkát, which he had summoned to his aid, at once began to levy native troops. A fortnight later, the 20th, the hundred men expected from Bengal arrived. With these, the

eighty men forming the garrison of Madras, and about eight hundred sepoys he took the field (22nd February), and effected a junction the same day with the Arkát garrison. This junction raised his force to a strength of three hundred and eighty Europeans, thirteen hundred sepoys, and six field-pieces. At the head of these he marched in the direction of Vendalúr, where, he had learned, the enemy had established a fortified camp.

The enemy were somewhat stronger in numbers. They had four hundred Europeans, two thousand sepoys, two thousand five hundred horsemen, and twelve field-pieces. But the knowledge that Clive was in the field more than neutralised the effect of their superiority. Some days before his arrival they had, indeed, taken up a position at Vendalúr, some twenty-five miles from Madras, and having strongly fortified it, had begun to ravage the country in the vicinity of the latter. Well served by spies, they heard on the 21st that Clive was about to march against them. They did not stay to meet him, but, with a pre-arranged plan to re-unite at Kánchipuram, they dispersed, to delude their foe, in different directions.

Clive had hoped to surprise the enemy at Vendalúr. Before he had marched half-way, however, he learned that they had quitted that place, in what direction he could not learn. He, therefore, continued his march, and reaching Vendalúr, sent to search for the information which he could not obtain on the spot. After a few hours' halt there he learned that the enemy had rallied their forces at Kánchipuram, and had started

thence in a westerly direction. Strongly suspecting that their object was Arkát, he marched with all speed on Kánchipuram.

Arriving there he could gain no certain tidings. He proceeded, however, to summon the fortified pagoda. This place which, well garrisoned, might have caused him considerable trouble, had been left under the guard of three hundred sepoys. These mercenary soldiers cared little whether Chanda Sáhib or Muhammad Ali, still less whether the English or the French, gained the upper hand, and they surrendered at the first summons. Still he could gain no certain information regarding the enemy. They were well served, for every new report contradicted its predecessor.

At last, as the shades of evening began to fall, he received information upon which he could rely. The enemy were at Arkát. Clive could not follow immediately. His men had marched forty-five miles and required rest. A few hours later, however, he started on the Arkát road. On his way he received intelligence that the enemy had attempted that fortress, had failed, and had then quitted the place with precipitation—in what direction no one knew. This intelligence only confirmed him in his resolve to cover with all speed the twenty-seven miles which separate Kánchipuram from Arkát.

He had marched sixteen miles, and the sun was sinking low in the horizon when the town of Kávéripák came in sight. His men, not suspecting the proximity of danger, were marching in loose

order, when suddenly from the right of the road, at a distance of about two hundred and fifty yards, there opened upon them a fire from a battery of nine guns.

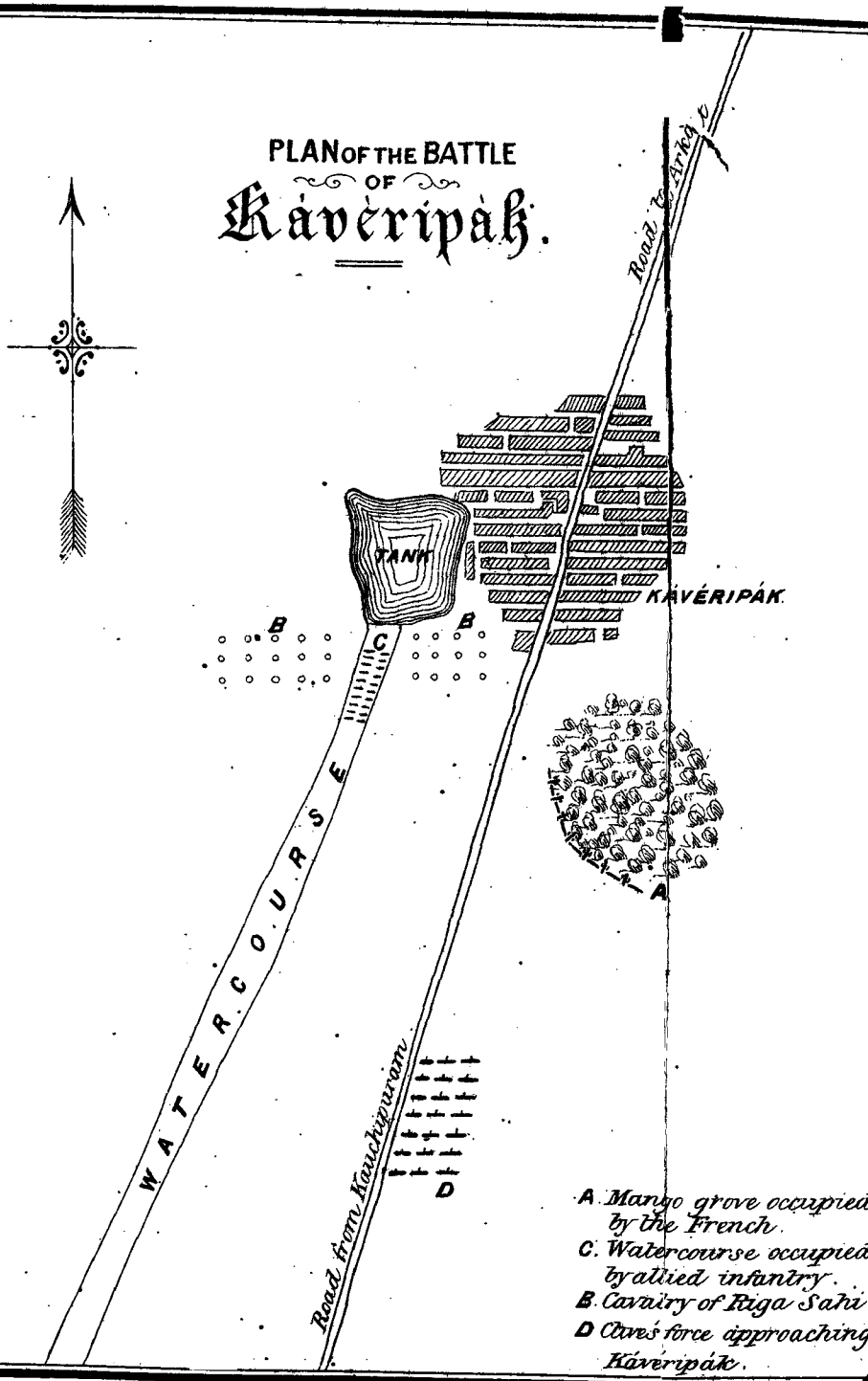
Clive, equally taken by surprise, at once halted his men, whilst he took a hasty survey of the field. He saw at a glance that the whole allied force of Ríza Sáhib and the French were before him. Their guns were posted in a thick grove of mango-trees, with a ditch and bank in front of it; from the grove, right across the road to a water-course, which ran almost parallel to the road to the left of it, he saw the enemy's cavalry even then extending, covering, as they did so, the movement of the French infantry in the direction of that water-course, with the evident design of ascending it, and by means of it taking his own men in flank. Clive took in all this, I say, at a glance, and he set to work to meet the danger on the moment. Taken by surprise, whilst the shades of evening, in a country where twilight is unknown, were deepening every moment, he could not help recognising that the enemy's position was an excellent one, and that the chances were enormously in their favour. The occasion was one, however, especially calculated to draw out the resources of a man of genius, to prove that in times of enormous difficulty and danger it is possible for the brain of one man to neutralise the advantages given by superior numbers, by a strong position, and by surprise. More than any previous act of his life, the conduct of Clive on this day stamped him as a man gifted by nature to lead his fellows. The

quality was born with him, as it has been born with every great soldier—for it is one impossible to acquire.

Clive made his brief survey in far less time than it has taken to record his action. His mind was made up on the moment. He moved the greater part of his infantry into the watercourse to the left of the road, there to be sheltered from the enemy's fire; he caused his baggage, which was close in rear of his column, to fall back half a mile under the protection of forty men and one gun; at the same time he moved to his left another forty Europeans, two hundred sepoys, and two guns to check the advance of the enemy's horsemen, who appeared to be extending to the left of and beyond the watercourse; the remainder of his guns, three in number, he drew up on the right of his new position and answered with them the fire from the grove. These dispositions were made under an artillery fire which at times was very effective, and under threats of attack from the enemy's cavalry.

Hardly had they been completed when the French infantry were observed marching up the watercourse in a column of six men in width. The English advanced to meet them in the same formation. Neither side seemed to care, however, to risk the chances of the bayonet; the French because, probably, they were aware that the events outside the watercourse were working in their favour and would decide the day; the English because they were inferior in numbers and a check would have meant total defeat.

# PLAN OF THE BATTLE OF Kávéripák.




A. Mango grove occupied by the French.
C. Watercourse occupied by allied infantry.
B. Cavalry of Raja Sahi.
D. Clive's force approaching Kávéripák.

The two rival columns, then, having an open space of eighty to a hundred yards between them, carried on for two hours, by the light of the moon, a musketry fire, more or less murderous in its effects.

Whilst this indecisive action was being pursued inside the watercourse, outside it events were taking very much the turn which the commander of the French infantry had anticipated. Granting, he had reasoned, that the contest inside were equal, he had, outside it, two great points in his favour, an enormous cavalry and superiority of guns. Clive, indeed, laboured under the disadvantage of having no cavalry at all. These two causes, then, were working against him during the two hours of which I have spoken. The enemy's cavalry were making repeated charges alike against the infantry opposed to them and on the party guarding the baggage; whilst the fire from the French guns, during the same period, had been so effective that many of the English gunners had been killed or disabled. It is true that the enemy's cavalry attacks had been till then repulsed, but with the cessation of the English artillery-fire they would gain heart, and, then, all would be over.

After two hours' fighting, then, things looked very desperate indeed. Prudence, writes the contemporary historian, Mr. Orme, counselled a retreat. Prudence may have so counselled, but in that case it was that bastard prudence, the bane of weak and worn-out natures, the disregard of which gained for Napoleon his victories in 1796, and the too great regard to which prevented Borodino from being decisive and

entailed all the horrors of the retreat from Russia. I have no doubt whatever but that, in making that assertion regarding prudence, Mr. Orme correctly interpreted the feeling of many men serving at that moment under Clive. But though the European experience of warfare against Asiatics was small in those days, Clive must have felt instinctively, as he certainly felt after long consideration on a subsequent occasion, that no third course was open to him. He must conquer, or he must die—there, where he stood. The stake was enormous. Defeat meant the loss of Madras left without a garrison, of Trichinápalli already at its last gasp, the supremacy of the French, the virtual extinction of his own countrymen in Southern India.

And yet, at 10 o'clock on that eventful evening (23rd February), Clive felt that unless he could capture the enemy's guns that great stake was lost. He resolved to make the attempt. It was impossible, he knew well, to assail the enemy's battery in front, for it was posted in a grove covered on two sides by a ditch and bank. But the enemy, in their confidence, might have left the approaches to it from the rear unguarded. This was a point to be ascertained. He sent, then, a sergeant at the head of a few sepoys on this mission. The sergeant returned with the happy intelligence that the approaches were entirely unguarded. It was then, Clive felt, not death but victory. Drawing from the watercourse the greater part of his Europeans, two hundred in number, and four hundred sepoys, he started to lead them,

the sergeant as the guide, to execute the decisive manœuvre. His departure from the watercourse produced, however, an effect upon the men stationed there which had almost proved fatal. Already greatly discouraged, they suddenly ceased firing and made every preparation for flight. Some even quitted the field. The sudden cessation of firing revealed to Clive, as if by intuition, its cause. He made over the command of the turning party to Lieutenant Keene, and returned, only just in time to reanimate his men. Keene, left to himself, leading his men with great prudence, succeeded in entering the grove from the rear. Halting at a distance of thirty yards from the guns, he poured a volley on the enemy serving and supporting them. The surprise was complete, the effect electric. Without returning a shot the enemy abandoned their guns and fled.

The victory was now gained: sixty Frenchmen surrendered as prisoners: Ríza Sáhib's army dispersed. The fruits of it were, on the face of it, nine guns, three mortars, and the field of battle: in reality, predominance in Southern India. It was the fight at Kávéripák, more even than the defence of Arkát, which secured for the English that predominance. Small comparatively as were the numbers engaged, it was, in very deed, one of the decisive battles of the world. Defeat would have entailed the entire destruction of Clive's army. On its result depended whether France or England should exercise paramount influence in the country between the Vindhayan range and Cape Kumárin. The victory at Kávéripák

decided that question. It made certain the relief of Trichinápalli. It gave the English a position which, threatened more than once during the thirty years which followed, they never lost.

In other respects the battle is worthy of study. It displays, more than any of his previous encounters, the character of Clive as a commander in the field. Granted that he was surprised. On that point I will only say that a general, unprovided with horsemen, compelled to make forced marches for a great purpose, opposed to an enemy commanding a numerous cavalry, can scarcely avoid a surprise such as that. But mark his readiness, his coolness, his calm courage, his clear head, his decision, his nerve. On that 23rd February Clive displayed every quality of a great commander. He justified the opinion recorded of him by one who knew him well, Major Stringer Lawrence:—"A man of undaunted resolution, of a cool temper, and a presence of mind which never left him in the greatest danger." In fine, to quote from the same high authority, "born a soldier, without a military education of any sort, or much conversing with any of the profession," Clive proved on that field his title to take rank among the great captains of the age.

The battle of Kávéripák cost the English the lives of forty Europeans and thirty sepoys. Many more were wounded. The enemy lost in killed fifty Europeans and not less than three hundred sepoys.

The day following the battle Clive took possession of the fort of Kávéripák and marched thence to

Arkát. On the 25th, when proceeding towards Vélúr, he received a despatch from Fort St. David directing him to return thither with all his troops, with the view of being employed for the relief of Trichinápalli, the English garrison of which was reported to be in the last stage of destitution. It would have been difficult, it may even be said impossible, for Clive to obey this order, had he not first disposed of Ríza Sáhib and the French. As it was, he at once changed the direction of his march, and destroying *en route* a rising town erected by Dupleix to commemorate the victory of De la Touche, reached Fort St. David on the 11th March.

A halt of three days at Fort St. David sufficed to complete the preparations for the new campaign. His force strengthened and re-equipped, Clive was about to set out. The 15th, however, witnessed the arrival from England of Major Stringer Lawrence, the very capable officer of whom I have already spoken. Upon him, as the senior military officer in the Presidency, the direction of so important an expedition naturally devolved. Two days later, then, he took the command from Clive and started for Trichinápalli.

The force, consisting of four hundred Europeans, eleven hundred sipáhís, with eight field-pieces, was escorting a large quantity of stores, and it was important that these should reach Trichinápalli with as little delay as possible. It would seem that many of the officers, fresh from England, felt extremely disinclined to submit without a murmur to the position, second in that detachment only to that of the

commander, given to a civilian such as had been Clive, and who now bore only a local commission. In his memoirs Lawrence makes pointed allusion to the "spirit of division which had unhappily crept in among his officers and caused many opportunities to be lost": to the practice of "some people to term his (Clive's) previous success fortunate and lucky." It was not so with Major Lawrence himself. His previous experience of Clive had satisfied him that his abilities were of the highest order, that he was a man to be entirely depended upon. Events were soon to silence the detractions of envy, to justify the confidence of Lawrence.

On the 26th March the force arrived within eighteen miles of Trichinápalli. It was met here by an artillery officer detached from the garrison, bearing the information that the enemy had posted a strong force at the fort of Koiládi, within cannon-shot of the road Lawrence would have to traverse the following day. Before I follow his movements it is well that I should return for a moment to the position of the besiegers and the besieged.

It seemed in very deed that the policy of Dupleix, baffled in North Arkát by the defeat of Kávéripák, was about to triumph at Trichinápalli. But for that ever-glorious achievement of Clive it must have triumphed. Trichinápalli, indeed, was at its last gasp. The English garrison was dispirited and starving; Muhammad Ali and his partisans were in despair; the Dalwai of Maisúr and Murári Ráo, the outside allies of the besieged, had become so

disgusted with the aspect of affairs within the place, that whilst the former could be held to the alliance only by assignments of territory, the latter meditated defection and had already begun to treat with Chanda Sáhib.

Such was the state of the affairs of the defenders of Trichinápalli and their allies when Lawrence and Clive set out from Fort St. David. In the camp of the besiegers a far different feeling prevailed. Law was confident that his measures, characterised as they had been by complete want of enterprise, were about to be crowned with success. His confidence was not shared by the illustrious ruler of Pondichery. Dupleix had watched with an eager and anxious eye the events of the preceding three months. The hopes, which had risen very high when the sudden reappearance in arms of Ríza Sáhib had enticed Clive and the only available English troops to the province of North Arkát, had been dashed to the ground by the defeat of Kávéripák. Dupleix had noticed with dismay, almost with despair, that Law had taken no advantage of the interval of two months and a half which the rising of Ríza Sáhib had given him, that he still pursued his plodding course of a blockade without risk. Vainly had Dupleix urged him to thrust home, to bring matters to an immediate issue. In reply Law had pleaded prudence. Certainly in the sense in which Mr. Orme used that word, when he declared that prudence counselled Clive to retreat from the field of Kávéripák, Law was prudent. But whilst the imprudence of Clive gained him a decisive

victory, the prudence of Law lost a whole army and a great cause. But, in sober truth, to apply the word prudence to such conduct is an abuse of terms. Prudence is always daring. It was daring that saved Clive; it was the want of daring that ruined Law!

When Dupleix found that the interval of two months and a half had been thrown away by his general, and that Lawrence and Clive were about to attempt an expedition which, if successful, would thwart all his plans and dissipate all his hopes, he sent to Law the most positive and stringent orders. He directed him to leave a few of his troops only to maintain the blockade before Trichinápalli, and, massing the remainder, to fall upon and attack the force led by Lawrence, encumbered, as it was, with a large convoy. Not content with these stringent orders he sent him full details of the English force, and even indicated the plan by the following of which success would be certain. He pointed out further that the approach of Lawrence's force would be the crisis of the campaign, and that his success meant absolute ruin to French interests in India.

Unhappily, there was a want of grasp about Law which rendered him incapable of taking in a comprehensive plan, still less capable of arranging its several details so as to act with one single purpose to accomplish a definite end. Let the reader mark how he carried out the very clear instructions he had received. He had been furnished with full details of the numbers and composition of the English force, told to maintain only a few men to mask

Trichinápalli, whilst, massing the remainder, he should fall upon Lawrence. These orders were clear, definite, and precise. It would be difficult not to understand them. But Law, nevertheless, did not carry them out. Bastard prudence whispered to him that the leaving of only a few men before Trichinápalli whilst he should march with the remainder against Lawrence, would expose those few men to the danger of a sortie from the garrison. Under the influence of this whisper he acted in direct contradiction to his orders. He sent two hundred and fifty Europeans and from three hundred to four hundred sipáhís to check the certain advance of the adventurous Lawrence, at the head of four hundred Europeans and eleven hundred sipáhís, whilst, inactive in camp and facing the unadventurous Gingen, he maintained a force of more than six hundred Europeans, and native levies to be counted by thousands! This detachment of two hundred and fifty Europeans and three to four hundred natives, proceeded to occupy Koiládi.

It was of the presence of that detachment at Koiládi that Major Lawrence had been informed on reaching a point eighteen miles from Trichinápalli on the 6th April. In itself the position was good, and had it been held in force by an energetic commander, Lawrence would have been greatly embarrassed. His advance would necessarily take him between two branches of the Kávéri. Of these the upper branch was defended by Koiládi on its northern bank, and was thus unassailable. Between

the northern and the southern banks was a distance, at this point, of less than half a mile. It will thus be seen that had Law massed his forces at Koiládi, he could not only have barred the road to the English, but, encumbered as they were with a large convoy, have probably crushed them. Halting, however, between two opinions, he had, as we have seen, sent thither a force which could annoy, but which could effect nothing decisive.

Lawrence had been thoroughly informed by the officer sent to meet him of the commanding position of Koiládi. Anxious regarding his convoy, he caused a large portion of it to enter the fort near which he was encamped—the fort of Trikatápalli belonging to the Rájá of Tanjúr. With the remainder, consisting principally of ammunition and stores, urgently required at Trichinápalli, he thought it might be possible to take a route which would be far from the guns of Koiládi. He sent his guides, therefore, to find such a route, and they returned during the night with a favourable report.

Early on the morning of the 7th April, Lawrence set out. But by some mischance his guides led him by the very path he had wished to avoid, and brought him before he was aware of it, within reach of the fire of Koiládi. From this false position Lawrence extricated himself with great skill. Ordering up his guns from the rear, and supporting them by a hundred Europeans under Clive, he replied by a general cannonade to the guns of the fort. Under cover of that cannonade, he moved his men and

convoy slowly, inclining to the left, and continuing the movement till he was beyond reach of the enemy's fire. He then halted till his guns should rejoin him. His loss was slight. On the guns coming up he pursued his march until he had arrived within ten miles of Trichinápalli.

Thus had Law's system of halting between two opinions produced its logical result. He had still time, however, to repair his fault. Ten miles yet lay between the enemy's relieving force and Trichinápalli. He could yet mass his outlying detachments, and attack Lawrence before Lawrence could reach that town. It was his last chance, and he was resolved to try it. No sooner had he heard that the English had passed Koiládi in safety, than he sent messengers calling in his various detachments.

Yet even then he showed no vigour. Instead of marching to meet his enemy, before he should be reinforced, he resolved to take up a position in which he might or might not be attacked. He drew up his men, then, so as to cover the line from the Kávéri to the inaccessible rock of Elmiseram, the French rock forming the centre of his position. This position barred one road, but not every road, to an advancing enemy.

Lawrence, ignorant of these movements, began his march early on the morning of the 28th March. Before the day had broken he was joined by a hundred Europeans and fifty dragoons from the garrison. These informed Lawrence that Elmiseram was occupied by the French, but that by marching on a point

to the south-west of it—the sugar-loaf rock—he would not only turn their position, but open communication with the garrison. Lawrence acted accordingly. He moved towards the sugar-loaf rock; on his way thither he was joined by two hundred Europeans and four hundred sipáhís under Captain Dalton, and by the Maráthá cavalry under Murári Ráo. At noon he halted and directed his men to prepare their food.

Again had he foiled Law. But that was not enough. It was written in the destiny of that man that he should do everything at the wrong moment. Having failed to attack Lawrence before he had been reinforced, he resolved to assail him after Lawrence had effected a junction with the garrison of Trichinápalli. Scarcely had Lawrence effected that junction when a messenger reached him with the intelligence that the French were advancing in force against him; that their artillery-fire had already put to flight the Maráthá cavalry.

It was noon. The heat of a Trichinápalli sun in April is always scorching. It was especially trying to men who, having just arrived off a long march, were about to prepare their breakfasts. But there was no help for it—the attack must be met. Lawrence at once despatched Clive to reconnoitre. Clive observed the entire force of the enemy drawn up, the whole of their infantry in the centre, supporting the guns, twenty-two in number, and flanked by large bodies of cavalry. In front almost of their centre, and nearer to them than to the English, was a large

caravansarai or native inn, flanked by stone buildings. Clive saw at a glance that these buildings were the key of the position. Held by the enemy with their twenty-two guns, the English would fight at a great disadvantage. Held by the English, on the other hand, their possession would more than neutralise the enemy's superiority in artillery fire. Yet they were within reach of the French. Surely they would not miss such a chance. But when, observing closely, Clive could discover no symptom of a movement on the part of the enemy, he galloped back and obtained permission to act. Placing himself at the head of the first division of artillery, supported by the grenadiers, he advanced with all speed and seized the caravansarai. That movement decided the day. Clive had thrust a wedge into the centre of the enemy's line. After a severe cannonade which lasted half an hour, and during which the English had all the advantage of the cover afforded by the caravansarai and its buildings, the French fell back, having lost forty Europeans and three hundred natives. The loss of the English amounted to twenty-one. Their native allies had been but little engaged. The next day Lawrence marched into Trichinápalli.

The two days' work I have recorded produced the most important consequences. It took all the heart out of the French commander. Depressed, anxious, and nervous, he thought now only of retreat. An attempt on the part of the English to surprise Chanda Sáhib, fortuitously converted into an attack on Elmiseram came to complete his perplexity. The

next day, the 12th April, after destroying the supplies destined for the siege of Trichinápalli, Law, abandoning the greater part of his baggage, crossed the Kávéri and retreated within Shrírangham. For some reason which cannot be divined, he did not withdraw the small French garrison of Elmiseram.

The retreat of the French into Shrírangham brought new conceptions into the brain of the conqueror of Arkát. To seize Elmiseram was an idea which would have occurred to any ordinary mind. But Clive's conceptions soared far higher, higher even than those of Lawrence. The ideas of Lawrence were confined by the contemplation of that which was immediately before him. He has left upon record that he considered Law's retreat into Shrírangham a "prudent" act—that is, an act inspired by a prudent regard for French interests. Not so thought Clive. In retiring into the island of Shrírangham the French had, he saw, entered an island invested by enemies on three sides, on the south, the east, and the west. What could they do if they were to be invested likewise on the northern side? A force detached from Lawrence's army would ensure that result. The more he looked at the idea the more feasible it seemed. Three conditions only were requisite to ensure success. The first, that the army south of Shrírangham should be firmly commanded; the second that the leader of the expeditionary force should be a man of tried capacity; the third that the commander of the French force should be a man not given to enterprise. There were three men on the spot, Lawrence, Clive, and Law,

eminently capable of fulfilling all three conditions. Impressed with this conviction, Clive made the proposal to Lawrence.

Lawrence recognised its force on the moment. Two difficulties only presented themselves to his mind. The first had reference to the second of the conditions of which I have spoken. He was about to incur a great risk—the risk of dividing his force in the presence of an enemy numerically equal to the whole, and of so separating the parts that the enemy at any moment could fall on either. It was essential, under such circumstances, that both the divided parts should be under the command of a capable general. For one of the two parts he could provide in his own person. But for the other? It is true Clive was serving under his orders, but he was serving as the junior of his rank, and of that rank there were many, some of whom possessed claims which it was not easy to pass over. That was the first difficulty. The second referred to the possibility of inducing the native allies of Muhammad Ali to co-operate in the movement.

It is a striking testimony to the impression which the character and achievements of Clive had produced on men who, whilst they are, as a rule, peculiarly susceptible to individual influence, never take for granted the superiority of others, that the second difficulty removed the first. When Lawrence laid his plan before Muḥammad Ali and his allies, the Dalwai of Maisúr and Murári Ráo, those chieftains made one stipulation, and one only, as essential to their consent to it. That stipulation was that the detached

party should be commanded by the officer who had defended Arkát, who had subsequently beaten the baffled besiegers at A'rní, and who had practically decided the campaign by his victory at Kávéripák. They insisted upon having Clive and no other.

Every difficulty having been thus removed, Clive was detached on the night of the 6th April with a force composed of four hundred Europeans and seven hundred trained sipáhís, three thousand Maráthá cavalry commanded by Yúnas Khán, and a thousand Tanjúr cavalry, with eight pieces of artillery, two of which were battering cannon, to carry out his designs. Descending the Kávéri, he crossed the island at a point three miles to the east of Law's encamping ground, to a village on the north bank of the Kolrún, called Samiaveram, about nine miles due north of the island of Shríangham, and commanding the approaches to the northern bank from the north and the east. He at once strengthened the defences of this village so as to make it secure against a *coup-de-main*.

His preparations had not been made at all too soon. Dupleix, utterly disgusted with Law, had resolved to supersede him. Of the only two men to whom he could entrust the command, de Bussy and d'Auteuil, the former held an important post at the court of the Súbahdár of the Dakhan, and could not be recalled. D'Auteuil, then, gouty as he was, was the only resource. That d'Auteuil, who had more than once failed him before, was a man fit to carry out his daring schemes, Dupleix certainly did not believe. But Law had failed so miserably, had shown himself so utterly

incompetent, that any change must be for the better. Dupleix, then, had, on the 10th April, despatched d'Auteuil at the head of a hundred and twenty Europeans and five hundred sipáhís, with four pieces, and a large convoy of provisions and stores, to take the command at Shrírangham, and restore the aspect of affairs.

D'Auteuil, following the route he had taken the previous year—the route through Valkonda—reached Utatúr on the 14th April, just one week after Clive had occupied Samiaveram. Here he learned the exact state of affairs; how Law was cooped up in Shrírangham, and how at Samiaveram there lay a superior force capable of preventing all communication with that island.

The intelligence did not dishearten d'Auteuil. The distance between Utatúr and Samiaveram is fifteen miles, and Samiaveram lay on his direct road. But as yet Clive had received no intelligence of his approach. It might be possible for him to make an oblique march to the Kolrún, which should avoid Samiaveram. He might be able at the same time to persuade Law to make a diversion in his favour. At all events he would attempt it. As a preliminary he at once despatched messengers to Law to warn him of his intended action.

Meanwhile, Clive had not been idle. The reader will recollect that when, in 1751, Captain Gingen's force retired before the French into Shrírangham, it had taken post, before crossing the Kolrún, at the fortified pagoda of Paichandah, on the north bank of

the Kolrún, and forming the principal gateway into the island. The importance to a force cooped up in Shrírangham of holding such a place cannot be overestimated. Were that gate lost, all would be lost.

Second only in importance to Paichandah was the pagoda of Mansúrpét, about midway on the high road between it and Samiaveram. This place was important, because it commanded a view of the country for miles on every side. It was a post of supreme consequence to Law. In the hands of an enemy it would be an eye to see and a hand to strike.

A third place, scarcely ranking even after Mansúrpét, was Lálgudi, a mud fort on the northern bank of the Kolrún, about two miles to the east of Paichandah, and constituting, as it were, an alternative gate into and out of the island. The fact of its not being connected with the high road rendered it of somewhat less value than the other. Still it was a place which Law was bound to hold at all hazards.

Conscious of the value of these places, Law had occupied them—but with small detachments only. Clive noting this, and rating them at their true importance, stormed Mansúrpét the second day after he had crossed the river: the day following he attacked and stormed Lálgudi.

By these operations Clive had rendered extremely difficult the task of d'Auteuil, acting, be it remembered, with a force far inferior to his own. But d'Auteuil, trusting that Law would respond to the messages he had sent him, marched from Utatúr on the afternoon of the 14th, and took, not the road which leads to

Samiaveram, but another, bearing westward, in the direction of the head of the island. It happened, however, that Clive had captured one of his messengers, and, rendered thus aware of his plans, had set out at the same time to meet him.

D'Auteuil, well served by his intelligence department, had not marched many miles before he received warning of Clive's movement. It being no part of his aim to fight a pitched battle in the open, he promptly retraced his steps to Utatúr. Clive, learning this, and not wishing to be drawn into a siege when a more numerous enemy lay within a few miles of him, returned to Samiaveram.

Meanwhile another opportunity had been offered to Law. From one of the messagers sent by d'Auteuil he had heard of the latter's intended march; from his scouts he received information of Clive's movements. Here was a chance. He still held Paichandah. To debouch by that place with his force and with Chanda Sáhib's army; to fall upon the ill-protected Samiaveram, or to take Clive's army in the rear—this was a conception the prompt execution of which might yet atone for many faults and redeem the fortunes of the campaign!

Again, some glimmering of the course he ought to adopt flickered through the brain of Law. Again, he could not brace himself to efficient execution. Instead of using the only means which presented a chance of success—of moving out with his whole force—he detached eighty Europeans, of whom forty were deserters from the English ranks, and seven

hundred sipáhís, to carry out a scheme upon the successful execution of which depended, not only the triumph of his cause, but the very safety of his army!

It was midnight (14th April). Only one hour had elapsed since Clive had returned to Samiaveram. His English soldiers there occupied two pagodas, a greater and a lesser, about a quarter of a mile distant the one from the other; around these lay the sipáhís, and beyond again the Maráthás. Clive himself and his officers used the caravansarai behind the lesser pagoda. The whole camp, the sentinels alone excepted, slept as men sleep after a fatiguing march made under the April sun of Southern India. At that hour, and under such circumstances within Samiaveram, Law's detachment stealthily approached the place. The name of the commander is not given in any of the French memoirs, but, whatever it may have been, he who bore it was certainly a man of daring and determination. He had been told that he would find Samiaveram poorly guarded, as Clive had marched out of it to meet d'Auteuil. But as he neared the place a spy brought him the information that Clive and his army had returned. Had the commander been other than a daring and determined man this information would have led him to retrace his steps. It only inspired his bold spirit with the hope of accomplishing results greater than those which, till then, had lain before him. He pressed on, then, still stealthily and resolutely, till he came within the challenge of the native sentinels. Here his deserters stood him in good stead. The officer

who commanded them, an Irishman, stepped forward and said that he had been sent by Major Lawrence to support Clive. As the other English-speaking soldiers pressed up at the same moment, the sentinel and his native officer were completely taken in, and the latter even sent one of his men to conduct the party to the English quarter of the camp. They marched through lines of sleeping Maráthás and sleeping sipáhís till they reached the lesser pagoda. Here they were again challenged. Their reply was a volley into the pagoda, another into the caravansarai containing Clive and his officers, followed by their entrance into the pagoda and then bayoneting every man whom they met.

It was this volley which awoke Clive from his midnight sleep. The situation was extremely critical. For aught he knew at the moment he might have the whole army of Law reinforced by that of d'Auteuil upon him. But in that emergency his brain was as clear and his judgment as cool as it was when he had marched that morning towards Utatúr. He saw at a glance that the lesser pagoda and the caravansarai were the objects of attack, and that the greater pagoda had been neglected. He ran at once to that pagoda, got the men there, who had already taken the alarm, under arms as quickly as possible, and returned with two hundred of them to the caravansarai. On arriving there he found a large body of sipáhís drawn up with their backs to the caravansarai, and firing at random in the direction apparently of the enemy's camp. Believing them to be his own men, he drew

up his European troops within twenty yards of their rear, and going then amongst the sipáhís, upbraided some for their panic, and, striking others, ordered them to cease fire. But the sipáhís were not his own men, they were the French sipáhís who had attacked his camp; and one of the native officers recognising Clive to be an Englishman, attacked and wounded him with his sword. Clive, still under the delusion that they were his own men, replied to the attack, and, exasperated at what he conceived to be the man's insolence, drove him before him to the gate of the lesser pagoda. Here, to his complete surprise, he was accosted by six Frenchmen. In a moment he realised his position; in the same moment he had taken his resolution. In reply to the Frenchmen, who had summoned him to surrender, he stated with the utmost composure, that, far from surrendering, he had come to offer them terms; that if they would look around they would see that their case was hopeless, that they were surrounded by his whole army, and that his men were determined to give no quarter if resistance were made. The firmness with which these words were uttered, and the calm demeanour of the speaker, made so great an impression, that whilst three of the Frenchmen ran within the pagoda to convey the intelligence to the commander, the other three surrendered their arms on the spot. Clive then hastened to the caravansarai to act with his Europeans against the sipáhís whom he now knew to be enemies; but these latter, scenting the danger, had marched away, and, passing unmolested through the camp by

favour of the darkness and general turmoil, had gained the road to Paichandah.

Meanwhile, confusion and uncertainty still reigned rampant within the camp. On the one side, Clive would not believe that such a daring attempt would have been made unless it had been supported by the whole French allied force; on the other, the French who had taken the lesser pagoda were extremely disquieted by the message from Clive carried to them by their three comrades. The confusion which prevailed on both sides was illustrated by a singular incident. The French commander, who had massed his Europeans within the lesser pagoda, wishing to ascertain the exact state of affairs outside it, detached eight of his most intelligent men on this errand. This small party fell in with a body of English troops, and were taken prisoners. The English commander made them over to a sergeant's party with directions that they should be lodged in the lesser pagoda, of the capture of which he had not heard. The sergeant took the eight men and the three who had surrendered to Clive, and made them over to their own countrymen! But, stranger still, these latter had so lost their heads, that they made no attempt to detain the sergeant and his party!

Clive had ascertained, pretty well, by this time, that the only place held by the enemy was the lesser pagoda. He could not, however, divest his mind of the idea that that which ought to have happened had happened, and that the whole force of the enemy was in the vicinity waiting for the coming dawn to storm

the place. Were this assumption to prove correct he would be terribly incommoded by having an enemy at the same time in his very midst. He determined, then, to storm the lesser pagoda without delay. It was a difficult task, as the pagoda was very strong and the entrance to it so small that it admitted only two men abreast. He led his men, however, to attack it, but the defence was so desperate that, after losing one officer and fifteen men, he drew off the remainder, and resolved to suspend his attack till daybreak.

Meanwhile, the French commander, knowing he was unsupported, and feeling he was in a trap from which there was no escape, except by sheer daring, had resolved not to wait for a renewal of the onslaught. As soon as the day broke, then, he sallied forth at the head of his men. But the English, who were on the watch, received him with a volley so well directed that twelve of his men were killed on the spot; the rest ran back into the pagoda. Clive, wishing now to terminate the contest, advanced to the gateway and entered the porch to offer terms. Faint from the loss of blood caused by the wounds he had received, he stood with his back to the wall of the porch, leaning, as he stooped forward, on the shoulders of two sergeants who accompanied him. To meet his request for a parley, there presented himself the commander of the deserters, the Irishman of whom I have already spoken. This man, conscious probably of the fate in store for him as a deserter, replied to the advances of Clive by abusive language, then, suddenly

levelling his musket discharged it at him point blank. The ball missed Clive, but it traversed the bodies of the two sergeants and wounded them mortally. The incident was, however, decisive. The senior French officer, infuriated at the conduct of his Irish comrade, stepped forward at once to disavow the act, and stating, that whilst up to that time he had been prepared to defend the post to the last extremity on account of the deserters alone, yet that the conduct of their leader absolved him from that obligation, offered to surrender with his whole force. The offer was accepted. With the surrender terminated the affair within Samiaveram.

Without it one other event remains to be recorded. As soon as it was daylight Clive had sent orders to Yúnas Khán to pursue the French sipáhís who had passed out of camp in the darkness. These orders were so promptly and so effectually carried out, that, it is said, not a single sipáhí returned to the banks of the Kolrún. The Maráthás declared that they killed every one of them, and though this was probably an exaggeration, the slaughter must have been very great.

The English themselves suffered very great losses —how great it is impossible to say—for on this occasion, and on this occasion only, there is no contemporary record of casualties. Considering that the occupants of the lesser pagoda, who exceeded a hundred in number, were surprised, and that many of them were bayoneted before they could recover from their surprise; considering, moreover, the number of

those who suffered in the assault, it may be concluded that Clive lost very nearly one-fourth of his effective Europeans.

With respect to the blame which rests upon his shoulders for the surprise, I may remark, that whilst, of contemporary writers, Major Lawrence and Mr. Orme record the incident without imputing negligence to Clive, Caffarelli speaks of it as a shameful surprise, that is, a surprise shameful to Clive. I think Caffarelli is wrong. Clive took every possible precaution; he had returned only an hour before the surprise was attempted; he had seen nothing to excite any suspicion that an enemy was in the neighbourhood; he had taken care that the sentries were duly posted. Those sentries were deceived by a stratagem, and on them, and not on Clive, must be the shame, if there were any, of the surprise. As to Clive's conduct after he had realised the actual position, I can only repeat here what I have recorded elsewhere, that never did he vindicate more completely his title to be a leader of men than on that eventful night. He, and he alone, caused the surprise to recoil on the heads of those who had attempted it.

In one respect Fortune favoured him. He had three narrow escapes of his life. The second and third I have already recorded. The first occurred in this wise. When the French fired their first volley Clive was sleeping in the caravansarai, with a box at his feet and his servant close to him. The volley shattered the box and killed the servant!

For some days after this attempt but little occurred on the north bank of the Kolrún. D'Auteuil remained quiet at Utatúr waiting for an opportunity; Law remained quiet at Shríangham waiting for d'Auteuil. Lawrence determined at last to disturb this tranquillity. Unwilling to expose Samiaveram to the chances of a second surprise whilst Clive should be absent on such a service, he directed him to remain watching the enemy in the island whilst he himself should despatch a force to deal with the French at Utatúr.

Having ensured perfect security on his own side by capturing Koiládi, the last place there which held out for the French, Lawrence sent Dalton with a hundred and fifty Europeans, four hundred sipáhís, five hundred Maráthás, and four field-pieces, to beat up d'Auteuil (9th May). Dalton profited by the dismay which recent events had, he well knew, caused amongst the French. Marching on Utatúr, he displayed his troops in such a manner as to induce d'Auteuil to believe that Clive's whole force was marching against him. Impressed with this idea, d'Auteuil quitted Utatúr in the night, and, abandoning all his stores, made a hasty and disorganising retreat upon Valkonda. Dalton then marched to Samiaveram and placed his troops at the disposal of Clive. To avoid disputes regarding rank, he offered to serve as a volunteer under his orders.

Meanwhile, Law had acted as Lawrence had believed it possible he might act should Clive march against d'Auteuil. Observing from the watchtowers of Shríangham the march of Dalton towards Utatúr, and imagining that it was Clive and his whole force,

he had promptly done that then, which, if vigorously executed on the previous occasion, would have ruined the English—he had crossed the Kolrún with his whole force. He was soon undeceived. Clive was not the man to be twice taken in by the same guile. From the heights of the pagoda of Mansúrpét his scouts had watched all the movements of the enemy. Resolving, if possible, to finish the campaign at a blow, Clive marched to meet him, and Law had scarcely entered Paichandah when he learned that the English were within a mile of him.

This was the last chance which Fortune, so often disdained, gave to Law. He rejected that chance also. Well had it been for him had no Paichandah been at hand to cover his return to the island. Well had it been for him if he had found himself cut off from the river when he received intimation of the presence of the English. At least, then, he would have fallen fighting. Nay, if numbers count for anything, he had a great chance of victory. But he was cowed, cowed by the success of the enemy who had beaten him without fighting. Waiting, then, for the shades of evening to fall, he recrossed the river, only a few days later to surrender—again without fighting.

The end was now approaching. On the 15th of May Clive captured Paichandah. Having thus completely shut up Law in the island, and made his surrender a matter of certainty, he marched to Valkonda to give the finishing stroke to d'Auteuil. He conceived it to be just possible that an energetic commander in d'Auteuil's position might yet effect

a diversion in Law's favour, more especially as he had received information that d'Auteuil had marched from Valkonda, and in the direction of the Kolrún.

Believing that d'Auteuil would necessarily pass Utatúr, Clive marched on that place, arrived there just before nightfall, and waited for his enemy. The enemy did not appear. On the very rumour that Clive had left the banks of the Kolrún in search of him, d'Auteuil had made a hasty retreat to Valkonda. Clive, who had previously gained over the commandant of that place, followed d'Auteuil thither, and forced him, placed, as it were, between two fires, to surrender with his whole force (29th May).

Three days later Law followed his example. The surrender of d'Auteuil had deprived him of his last hope. Despair did not give him the daring which would have impelled a man of a nobler stamp to cut his way out. With the seven or eight hundred Europeans, the two thousand sipáhís, and the three thousand or four thousand native levies who still remained true to Chanda Sáhib, he might easily have taken advantage of a long dark night to cross the Kávéri and fall upon Lawrence's troops, greatly inferior to his own. Having overpowered them, he could have cut his way to Kárikál. In vain did Chanda Sáhib press this course upon him; decisive action was not for a man like Law. Waiting for a chance which never came, and an accident which never presented itself, he hesitated, and was lost.

He was hesitating still, yet not daring to act, when the arrival in the English camp of a battering train

decided him. He then agreed to surrender. He tried hard to save the life of the prince of whom he was only the auxiliary, and that life was promised him. The promise was not kept. Chanda Sáhib was stabbed to the heart a few hours after he had given himself up. Before this atrocious deed had been perpetrated thirty-five French officers, seven hundred and eighty-five French soldiers bearing arms, besides sixty sick and wounded, and two thousand French sipáhís had surrendered themselves to the English commander (1st June). The island was then taken possession of. The contest for the Núwábship of the Karnátak had been decided in favour of the candidate supported by the English. In bringing about that result "it is difficult to determine," to quote the words of Mr. Orme, "whether the English conducted themselves with more ability and spirit, or the French with more irresolution and ignorance, after Major Lawrence and Captain Clive arrived at Trichinápalli."

With the disappearance of his rival began the real difficulties of Muhammad Ali and his native allies, difficulties which in a very few weeks greatly neutralised the effect of the French surrender, and caused, eventually, the renewal of the struggle. The native chiefs, in a word, disputed over the spoil. So bitter was the strife that although the French had surrendered on the 1st June, it was not until the 28th of the same month that Muhammad Ali was able to quit Trichinápalli, and even then he was forced to beg the English to leave there two hundred of their

own men and fifteen hundred of their trained sipáhís to protect the fortress against his own allies of Maisúr and Tanjúr and Gutti, with whom he had failed to keep faith.

The remainder of the English force accompanied Muhammad Ali in his march from Trichinápalli towards Fort St. David. Tiruvádi, a small fort thirteen miles from that place, was, of all the places on their route, alone occupied by a French garrison. The sipáhís who composed it surrendered at the first summons. Lawrence then quitted the force for Fort St. David, to seek there the repose which the fatigues and exposure of the campaign had rendered necessary. Clive, incited by similar reasons, proceeded at the same time to Madras, which, in consequence of orders from England, had again become the seat of the English administration in southern India.

Clive had not been many days at the Presidency before, in spite of his failing health, his services were again called in requisition. Two strongholds, in dangerous vicinity to Madras, Kovilam (Covelong) and Chengalpatt, were occupied by French garrisons. It seemed to Mr. Saunders very desirable that these should be reduced before the reinforcements from Pondichery, then daily expected, should arrive. It happened opportunely that Madras had just welcomed two hundred recruits from England; Mr. Saunders had, likewise, recently enlisted five hundred sipáhís. At the head of these raw and inexperienced troops, who had scarcely seen even a parade-ground, Clive was despatched (10th September) to reduce the two

strongholds I have mentioned. He took with him two 24-pounders.

Kovilam lies on the sea-coast, twenty-one miles south of Madras. It was then a walled fort, flanked by round towers, mounting thirty guns, but without a ditch. It was garrisoned by fifty French soldiers and three hundred sipáhís. Clive arrived within two miles of it the evening of the day following that of his departure from Madras. The next morning the garrison, in a sally, killed one of his officers, and so alarmed the raw troops the officer was leading, that they fled in confusion. "They would, indeed," says Mr. Orme, "have fled as far as Madras, but that Clive, meeting them, forced them, sword in hand, and not without violence, to return."

The siege, which Clive at once laid to the place, was a good schooling for his soldiers. They caused him, however, an infinity of trouble, for they took fright on every alarm. "An unlucky shot," says Mr. Orme, "which struck the rock, and with the splinters it made killed and wounded fourteen men, frightened the whole so much, that it was some time before they would venture to expose themselves again." Be it remembered that these men were simply recruits, the boy-soldiers of the present day!

With such material at his disposal, fighting against stone walls manned by trained soldiers, many a commander would have despaired. But not only did Clive not despair, but, when he received information that a considerable force of the enemy was marching from Chengalpatt to force him to raise the

siege, he marched with half his force to offer them battle! His daring received its just reward. The relieving force retired with precipitation. The next day, too, he was relieved from all anxiety regarding Kovilam. Probably his raw material would never have taken the place. But the attitude assumed by Clive had cowed the French commander. It is tolerably certain that this man was a very poor specimen of the profession, caring more for his own comfort than the honour and glory of his country, for on the fourth day of the siege he offered to capitulate, "on condition that he might carry away his own effects." Those effects, Clive discovered the next day, consisted of turkeys and snuff!

The place had surrendered only just in time, for the next morning the enemy from Chengalpatt arriving on the spot, ignorant of the surrender, almost effected a surprise of the English camp. As it was, thanks to the care of the French commandant for his effects, they were completely surprised themselves, and compelled to flee, after suffering very severe losses, back to Chengalpatt.

Clive followed them up very closely, and at once laid siege to the fort, which had the reputation of being the strongest in that part of the country. It was very strong, was well garrisoned, and well provisioned. Well defended, it might have held out for an indefinite time. But its commandant, likewise, was deficient in the true qualities of a soldier. After a siege of four days a breach had been made in the outer and inner wall. The place was still not only

defensible, but virtually proof against assault. But, in spite of this, again did the daring of Clive assert itself over the weaker nature of his opponent. His threatening attitude induced the latter to offer to surrender on condition of being allowed to retire with his garrison to Pondichery. Clive agreed, and took possession of the place the next day (31st October).

These expeditions, causing as they did great exposure, had not improved the health of Clive. From Chengalpatt, then, he returned to Madras, again to rest. Very shortly after his arrival there he married Miss Maskelyne, the sister of one of his earliest friends. Shortly after his marriage, finding his health still continued to deteriorate, he took the resolution of revisiting Europe. Having been granted leave for this purpose, he sailed from Madras, with his bride, in February 1753.

What a different position was his to that which he had occupied nine short years before! The unknown and friendless writer had, in the interval, laid the foundations of an empire! He could not yet claim this honour; he could only assert that he had thwarted the aspirations of his country's enemies, and prevented French domination in Southern India. But he had, in reality, accomplished a great deal more than that. By his achievements at Arkát, at Kávéripák, and before Trichinápalli, he had convinced the princes and people of India not only that the English could fight, but that they could fight better than the race which till then had chained their admiration, better than the French. As soon as this conviction had dawned upon

them, the longing for the support of the stronger, which is a characteristic of the races of India, was transferred to the countrymen of Clive. The idea that they must prevail became from that time, by a process gradual and yet certain, an article of faith in Southern India. Whenever, in the years that followed, that article of faith came to be questioned—and it was questioned occasionally—the action of the successors of Clive caused it to be re-asserted, to gain deeper and more stable foundation. But to Clive is due the planting of the seed. His action during the second moiety of those nine years brought, for the first time, English supremacy in Southern India within the range of practical politics. Such a result could, at the close of 1752, be talked of as, at least, something more than possible. All that had been accomplished—the conquest of the central Karnátak, the defeat of Chanda Sáhib, the collapse of the French, had been virtually, even actually, accomplished by the English; and in that work Clive had been the main author—his had been the brain to conceive, his the firm heart to dare—his the steady hand to execute. He had accomplished much in those nine years. He was to do more in the seven that were to follow!

## CHAPTER VII.

ENGLAND; GHERIAH; MADRAS.

THE reputation of Clive had preceded him to his native land. The wild scapegrace of eighteen returned a hero at twenty-seven. No disparagement had been too bitter for him then, no compliment was too marked for him now. The Court of Directors had, indeed, been so justly terrified by the early successes of Dupleix, by the "all but" triumph of his ambitious designs, that they were at the moment disposed to express all their gratitude, and to bestow all their favours on the man whose genius had converted defeat into victory, despondency into triumph. Clive had scarcely set foot in England before the incense, so grateful to a man when offered by his country to mark that country's sense of the services he had endeavoured to render her, impregnated the very air he breathed. The Court of Directors entertained him at a semi-royal public dinner. They presented him with a diamond-hilted sword of the value of five hundred guineas. They solicited his advice with a deference which is

only manifested by city men towards one whose merits have already forced themselves to the loftiest place in public approval.

The adulation offered was such as might have turned the head of many a man. Clive conducted himself, however, in a manner which even increased the feeling of the public in his favour. Neither in his private nor his public utterances did he ever forget the obligations under which he felt himself to the men who had given him the opportunities without which he would still have languished an obscure writer in Madras—Major Lawrence and Governor Saunders. So far, indeed, did he carry his sense of the obligations he owed to the former, that when the Court voted him the sword of which I have spoken, to mark their sense of his military services in the Karnátak, Clive refused to accept it unless a similar compliment were paid to his old friend and commander.

Fortunes in those times were acquired in India much more easily than they are in the present day, and it surprised no one to learn that Clive had returned to England with a very handsome income. It is not necessary to scan too closely the means by which that fortune had been acquired. It certainly was not derived from savings from his scanty pay, nor wholly from prize-money, properly so called. The fact that in those days it was considered perfectly legitimate to accept presents from native princes, as a mark of their sense of services rendered, is sufficient to account for the accumulations he had made. Clive had rendered great services to Muhammad Ali

and to others, and it was in those days considered as most natural that the native prince should show his gratitude in the only manner in which he could display it. Nor can the most censorious blame Clive for accepting a present, considered in those days a legitimate offering, the refusal of which would have been regarded as an insult.

Having this fortune, and having no occupation, it is not to be wondered at that a man possessing the active brain of Clive should be anxious to serve his country in Parliament. He had arrived in England at a time when the Whig party was supreme. But that party was a house divided against itself, one section of it being led by the Duke of Newcastle, the other by Henry Fox, afterwards Lord Holland. Clive attached himself to the latter, and, after a desperate contest, was returned, by Lord Sandwich's interest, for the borough of St. Michael. The return was disputed. Heard before a Committee of the whole House, the case was decided in Clive's favour; but when the resolution was reported to the House itself, the Duke of Newcastle had sufficient influence to have it reversed by a narrow majority, and Clive was unseated.

Meanwhile he had been living at a rate which even his fair income did not warrant. He had, moreover, lessened that income by redeeming the debt with which his father's estate had been encumbered, and by placing his father and mother in a position beyond the reach of the storms of fortune. This contested election came to reduce still further his fortune.

What was he to do? Europe was at peace. His active, restless, and ambitious mind—the mind, be it always remembered, of a born ruler of men, and, as such, requiring power, the exercise of rule, as its daily sustenance—could not vegetate in a country village. It is not to be wondered at, it was indeed most natural that, under these circumstances, Clive should again eventually seek employment in the country where he had won his renown.

In the search for position Clive spent his two first years in England. Meanwhile, the circumstances of Southern India were undergoing, during the same period, a marked change. After various vicissitudes Fortune had begun once more to smile on the ambitious views of Dupleix. For, although his troops had been again and again foiled in their attempt to storm Trichinápalli, his influence was supreme in the Dakhan, and the important territory known as the Northern Sirkars, comprising the districts now known as Ganjam, Vishákpatanam, Rájámahendri, Machhlípatanam, and Guntur, had been ceded to France. It may, indeed, be said that towards the close of 1754 Dupleix had more than regained the position of which Clive had deprived him in 1752. For, though Trichinápalli held out, it was blockaded; the English forces were diminished so as to be no longer formidable; Murári Rao had joined, the rájás of Tanjúr and Maisúr were ready to join, the French. The situation of the English had become, in fact, so strained that Governor Saunders had agreed, at a conference between the agents of the two Powers, to concede,

in substance, all the claims preferred by Dupleix, that regarding the governorship of the Karnátak alone excepted. Even with respect to that he had proposed that the office should be declared vacant, and that Muhammad Ali should be nominated under the joint protection of the French and English. Dupleix had refused.

From this strain, when their affairs were at their lowest ebb, the English were delivered by one of those freaks with which Fortune sometimes delights to perplex the counsels of nations. In an evil moment for France the French East India Company recalled their great Indian proconsul, and replaced him by Godeheu, a man of a cringing and servile nature, without patriotism and without generosity. On his arrival Saunders raised his demands, and Godeheu yielded all that Saunders asked.

In 1755, then, the two European trading communities in Southern India were at peace. They had signed a treaty that neither should ever interfere in the differences which might arise between native princes. It was a treaty made to be broken, for neither nation had attained the predominance necessary for the political effacement of the other. English influence was supreme in the Karnátak, but the French virtually ruled the Dakhan* and the country thence to the coast, north of Madras.

Such was the state of India when Clive, weary of

* The word "Dakhan" is used to signify the territory ruled by the Súbahdár of the Dakhan, somewhat larger than the existing dominions of the Nizám.

inactivity in England, applied to the Court of Directors for employment in India. His application was well received. The Court could not but feel that English influence in the Karnátak must be precarious so long as the French should be virtual masters of the Dakhan. To make a direct attack upon Haidarábád, aided only by Muhammad Ali, from Madras, was not to be thought of. But could they induce the Péshwá to wage against his hereditary enemy, the representative of the Mughul, a war in which the English could act as auxiliaries of the Péshwá, the end they desired might be obtained. Before, then, they had been made aware of the neutrality treaty of which I have spoken, they had entered into an agreement with the Péshwá and had prepared to send troops to support him. They had even gone so far as to nominate an officer to command the Europeans who should be engaged in such an expedition. This was Colonel Scot, who had proceeded the previous year to Madras as Engineer-General of all the Company's settlements in India. Of Scot's fitness for the post as compared with Clive's fitness the Court must have entertained considerable doubt; for the latter had no sooner expressed his wish to be employed in India than the Court nominated him Governor of Fort St. George, and obtained for him the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel in the royal army. Then, without actually superseding Scot, they desired Clive to proceed direct to Bombay, to be on the spot in case his services should be there required.

Scot relieved the Company of the dilemma by

dying. Before the news of his death had reached England, however, Clive had set out for Bombay, accompanied by three companies of Royal Artillery, each a hundred strong, and three hundred infantry recruits. He reached Bombay at the end of October (1755), to learn that Colonel Scot was dead.

Other tidings likewise awaited Clive at Bombay. He learned that in consequence of the convention entered into between Governor Saunders and Godeheu, the projected expedition against the Súbahdár of the Dakhan had fallen through. When, however, it seemed as though he had come upon a fool's errand, work of a legitimate nature suddenly presented itself.

During his wars with the Mughul dynasty Sívají, the founder of the Maráthá empire, had (1662) seized and fortified Vijiyádrúg, better known to the English as Gheriah, a town and fort at the mouth of the river Kanvi, on the western coast of India, about a hundred and seventy miles south of Bombay. During the same year the island of Súwarndrúg, about eighty miles north of Gheriah and ninety from Bombay, had been seized by the same prince and a strong fort erected upon it. From these two places Sívají had been in the habit of making quasi-piratical raids upon the vessels of the Great Mughul. Fifty years later both places passed from the hands of the successor of Sívají into those of Kánhaji Angria, the commander of the Maráthá fleet, and from them that chieftain had continued on his own account the piratical raids which he had conducted previously on behalf of his master. These raids had gradually

taken a more ambitious flight. From preying on the puny vessels of Indian merchants Kánhaji Angria had begun to attack, plunder, and destroy the trading vessels of the Europeans. The ships of the East India Company and of the French Company were not long exempt from his attacks. During the first half of the eighteenth century Kánhaji, and, after him, his son Túlaji Angria, had captured, besides vessels of lesser note, the "Darby," richly laden, having on board a hundred and fifty men; and, soon afterwards, the war-brig "Restoration," of twenty guns and two hundred men, which had been fitted out expressly to attack them. These successes made the Angria family still bolder. They attacked and captured the French war-ship "Jupitre," carrying forty guns; and a little later they had had the presumption to assail an English convoy, covered by two ships of war, the "Vigilant," of sixty-four guns, and the "Ruby," of fifty guns.

The Dutch, who had suffered not less than the French and English from the depredations of the Angria family, had, about the year 1735, despatched a fleet of seven ships of war, two bomb vessels, and a number of land forces against Gheriah. The attack had, however, been repulsed with loss. The depredations from that time increased in daring, until in February 1754 Angria's fleet attacked three Dutch ships of war, one of fifty, one of thirty-six, the third of eighteen guns, burned the two first and took the last. Upon this success Angria grew very insolent, and boasted that he would soon be superior to any naval force that could be brought against him. As

he followed up this boast by a rapid increase in his number of vessels, and by laying more on the stocks, the senior English naval officer on the coast, Commodore James, deemed it advisable to strike a blow at him before it should be too late. Having arranged with the Maráthá ruler of Satárah that his troops should co-operate by land, James, on the 2nd April 1755, sailed from Bombay with one ship of forty-four guns, one of sixteen, and two bomb-vessels to beat up the pirate in his island-home of Súwarndrug. He had with him, also, a few Maráthá vessels—but they were of little use for actual combat.

Then was seen the enormous advantage which attack confers upon a power combating against the natives of India. Túlaji Angria, who just twelve months before had captured a Dutch squadron, considerably exceeding in weight of metal that commanded by Commodore James, was anxious on this occasion only to save his ships from destruction. Whilst these, by skilful manœuvring, escaped, James attacked the strong fortress on the island. This, though of extraordinary strength, surrendered after a very faint resistance on the 13th April. Six days later James captured Bánkót, ten miles nearer to Bombay; he was proceeding further with his conquests when he was recalled to Bombay, the season being considered too far advanced for further operations.

Túlaji Angria had meanwhile taken refuge with his fleet in Gheriah, and he proceeded to render this strong place still stronger. When, then, in November 1755, Admiral Watson arrived at Bombay with his

squadron, it was resolved to complete the work begun by Commodore James, and to destroy the piratical fleet in its own waters. With this object in view, Watson despatched James with three ships to reconnoitre Gheriah. On his return, Watson sailed, early in February following, with four ships of the line, five frigates, one smaller vessel, and five bomb-ketches. On board this squadron, to co-operate with it from the land-side, was a force of eight hundred Europeans and a thousand sipáhís, commanded by Colonel Clive.

Admiral Watson, with whom Clive was now for the first time brought in contact, was an officer highly esteemed in the navy. A thorough master of his profession, eager and zealous in the service of his country, he was likewise a high-minded English gentleman. His mind was very differently constituted from that of his military colleague. The divergences between them were constantly manifested, and threatened sometimes to interfere with the carrying out of the public service.

Watson's squadron arrived before Gheriah on the 22nd February 1756. Whilst it was sailing, a Maráthá army, which was also to co-operate with it, had marched from Cháwal, twenty-three miles south of Bombay, and, almost simultaneously with the arrival of the fleet, had taken up a position to the east of the fortress, which thus became blockaded by sea and land. Túlaji Angria, terrified at his position, had at once resolved to take refuge in the camp of his own countrymen, with the view of inducing them to

join against the common enemy of the Asiatic race. He did not quite succeed in that calculation, but the Maráthá leader, determined to gain the fortress for his own people, extorted from Angria an order for its delivery to himself, and not to the English.

The afternoon before this arrangement was to be carried out (23rd February), information of it had reached Watson. No time was to be lost. To foil it, Clive at once landed with his men, and took up a position between the Maráthá army and the fortress. The fire from the ships, which had begun on the 23rd, was renewed on the 24th. So much did it terrify the garrison, that before evening they surrendered Gheriah, its arsenals, its ships, its stores, its booty, to Clive. It was found, then, that the fort had been capable of making a successful defence against the fleet, and could only have been taken by regular approaches on the land-side! Pure panic had caused its surrender. Such is the effect of *morale* in war! There are few armies amongst whom it is so strong as to enable its soldiers, once cowed, to resist enemies apparently, and only apparently, overwhelming. The surrender of the strongest fortresses in Prussia after Jena, is an illustration of this axiom.

As there remained nothing more to accomplish on the western coast, Clive and Watson proceeded to Fort St. David, the former landing there to take up his government, the latter continuing his course to Madras. Clive arrived at Fort St. David the 16th May. The times were critical. The ships which had

more recently arrived from Europe had brought information that a renewal of hostilities between France and England was certain, and that the former country, resolved that this time there should be no mistake regarding supremacy in Southern India, was preparing a large fleet and army for Pondichery.

As the forces of the two rival powers were then on about a footing of equality, a large accession of strength to the French could not be viewed with equanimity by the English authorities on the coast. Those authorities were engaged in debating how to meet the impending evil, when information reached them of a disaster, befallen nearer to their own doors, a disaster more terrible, more appalling, more reeking with barbarity, than any which the preponderance of the French in Southern India was likely to produce. The news was to the effect that the English settlement at Calcutta, on the river Huglí, had been attacked and captured by an army led in person by the Núwáb of Bengal, that several of their countrymen had perished, that many of the remainder had been carried away captive to Murshidábád by the victorious Núwáb, who, having sacked Calcutta, and changed its name to Alínagar, had, leaving there a garrison under his general Mánakchand, returned to his capital with the conviction that he had for ever extirpated the English from Bengal. He had, in reality, only sealed his own doom. Fugitives from Calcutta, alike during and after the siege, had escaped to Fultá, a small place on the Huglí, opposite the mouth of the Damúdah river, twenty-two miles south-

west of Calcutta. It was from these fugitives that the news of the disaster reached Madras.

It is unnecessary to give, in this place, more than a slight sketch of the proceedings which had led to the catastrophe of the Black Hole.

Siráju'd daulah had succeeded his famous uncle, Alí Vardi Khán, as Núwáb or Viceroy of the provinces of Bengal, Bahár, and Orísá in April 1756. Prior to his great uncle's decease, Siráju'd daulah had taken umbrage with the English settlers, first, because, he affirmed, they were harbouring state-offenders, and secondly, because, against his express orders, they were fortifying their factory.

The reply to the latter of the Governor of Calcutta, Mr. Drake, though in itself perfectly explicit, and proving that the fortifications had been repaired solely in view of anticipated hostilities with France, was probably not sufficiently submissive in its tone. It reached the Núwáb two or three weeks after his accession to the viceroyalty, and when he was marching at the head of an army against a relative who had presumed to be his rival. Instantly, in his rage, he changed the route of his army and directed it against the English factory of Kásimbázár, a suburb of the city of Murshidábád. The European garrison of that place consisted of only one officer and forty-four soldiers, of whom twenty were Dutchmen and Portuguese. With these were associated about two hundred and fifty matchlockmen. On arriving before this place, the Núwáb sent for the chief of the factory, Mr. Watts, bitterly upbraided him for the conduct of

his countrymen in Calcutta, and compelled him and the next two seniors in the factory to sign a paper pledging themselves to the destruction within fifteen days of the new fortifications. This happened on the 1st June; on the 4th the Núwáb took possession of Kásimbázár; on the 9th he marched for Calcutta.

The garrison of Calcutta consisted of two hundred and sixty-four men of all arms, but of these a portion were Portuguese or Eurasians; there were, also, two companies of militia, composed of the Company's servants and the other Christian inhabitants, amounting in number to two hundred and fifty. Of the grand total of five hundred and fourteen only a hundred and seventy-four were Englishmen. The fortifications were in wretched order, the supply of powder was small and its quality was inferior, the fuses for the shells had been driven many years before and were spoiled, the gun-carriages were mostly in a state of decay, and fifty new pieces which had arrived from England three years previously were lying dismounted and useless under the walls of the fort.

The Núwáb crossed the Huglí on the 15th of June and appeared before Calcutta the following day. An examination of the events of the five days' siege which ensued would satisfy the reader that great daring, energy, and devotion were displayed by the majority of Englishmen; selfishness, worse than cowardice, by others. The catastrophe which followed could never have taken place had every man been true to the dictates of honour. Every man was

not true to those dictates. There were vessels in the Huglí, lying off the fort, capable of carrying away the garrison when defence should become no longer possible. It will scarcely be credited that, when it had been decided to place the European women and children on board these vessels, the two Members of Council deputed to carry out this arrangement not only refused to return, but caused all the vessels to drop down the following morning to Govindpúr, three miles below the fort. Desertion on a greater scale took place when an attempt was made to despatch the Portuguese and Eurasian women and children by native boats to the same vessels. This bad example was followed, the next night, by the Governor, Mr. Drake, by the commandant of the troops, Captain Minchin, and other officers and men both of the regular troops and the militia. These desertions left Mr. Peakes the senior agent on the spot, but by general consent Mr. Holwell, from whose narrative, confirmed in all essentials by that of Mr. Grose, I have taken these details, was elected to the post of honour. But not even could his bright example inspire in others a feeling of common humanity sufficient to soar above the basest self-love. Even in the last agony of the siege it had been possible to save those who had not abandoned the defences. If the ships, still within sight of the fort, could have been induced to return, the garrison could yet have escaped the tender mercies of the enemy. The operation was perfectly feasible. The senior captain, however, Captain Young of the "Dodaly," pronounced

it dangerous. To his eternal infamy he allowed his ships and the other ships to lie at anchor for two days, till Calcutta was taken, without making the smallest effort to assist the Englishmen within its walls.

On the 20th June the Núwáb became master of Calcutta. It would be too long to dwell here on the measure he meted out to its unfortunate defenders. Let it suffice to say that whilst permitting the Portuguese and Eurasians to return to their homes, he made over his captives of pure English blood to his subordinates to be locked up for the night. These, irritated by a resistance which had caused the death of many of their comrades, caused the Englishmen, a hundred and forty-six in number, including one lady, to be confined for a night in a room eighteen feet square, with only two small barred windows. The consequences, during the sultry heat of June, the outside air loaded with dense smoke, were such as might be imagined. When the door was opened in the morning, only twenty-three ghastly figures were found to have survived the terrible night.

The news of the capture of Kásimbázár reached Madras on the 15th July. Fearing that this hostile act might be the prelude to an attack upon Calcutta, Mr. Pigot, now Governor of Madras, the same whom we have seen accompanying with Clive a party of European troops from Fort St. David in 1751, had hastened to despatch thither a force of two hundred and thirty men, principally Europeans, under the orders of Major Kilpatrick. Kilpatrick reached Faltá on the Hugli, on the 2nd August, to learn there, for

the first time, of the attack upon Calcutta and its fatal issue. By accessions from the Company's posts at Báleswar (Balasore), at Jagdiah, and at Dháká, this force was gradually increased to nearly four hundred and fifty men. It is worthy to be noted that among these accessions was a young writer named Warren Hastings.

Sickness, however, caused partly by compelled inaction, partly by exposure, partly by the necessity of sleeping on the open decks of the vessels at the most unhealthy season of the year, soon produced a rapid diminution in the numbers of this little band. The mortality, the necessity of action, the divided counsels, impressed the survivors with the advisability of making their case known at Madras. Two of the number, Mr. Manningham and Lieutenant Le Beaune—a strange selection, for both these gentlemen had fled from Calcutta in the early days of its agony—were deputed for this purpose. They reached Madras on the 5th August.

# CHAPTER VIII.

## Calcutta, Chandranagar, Míŕ J'afar, Siráju'd daulah.

When, on the 5th August, the news of the capture of Calcutta reached Madras, there were serving in that presidency four men, each of whom might have preferred, and three of whom did prefer, claims to command an expedition to avenge the outrage. Foremost amongst these was the veteran commander, Colonel Stringer Lawrence, a soldier of established renown; the second was Colonel Adlercron, commanding the 39th Foot, whose motto, *Primus in Indis*, dates from this year; the third was Mr. Pigot, the governor; the fourth was Robert Clive. To the first three, however, the objections which were raised seemed to counterbalance the advantages each was able to offer. Thus, the state of health of Lawrence was such as to render it very doubtful whether he could stand the damp climate of Bengal; of Adlercron it was urged that though undoubtedly a capable man, he had no experience of the country, and besides, he was, as commanding a King's regiment, independent of

the authority of the Company. Pigot, again, though known to be a man of action, had neither military experience nor military training; and although he could adduce the example of Clive to show that these were not always absolutely essential, it had yet to be proved that in his case they could be dispensed with. To Clive none of these objections applied. He, therefore, was selected, and to enable him to act with vigour so as to return soon to Madras, where apprehensions regarding the war with France still reigned rampant, he was invested with independent powers in all matters connected with military arrangements, was liberally supplied with money, and empowered to draw bills on the Madras Government.

On the 16th October Clive sailed for the Huglí. The fleet, commanded by Admiral Watson, consisted of four ships of war, five transports, and a fire-ship. The land force was composed of two hundred and fifty men of the 39th Foot, five hundred and seventy men of the Madras European Battalion, eighty artillerymen—in all, nine hundred Europeans—and twelve hundred sipáhís. He had also a few field-pieces and a large quantity of military stores. Of the nine hundred Europeans, little more than six hundred were able to land then on the banks of the Huglí; for the Admiral's largest ship of war, the "Cumberland," having nearly three hundred men on board, grounded off Point Palmyras on the 1st December, and was compelled to bear away to Vishákpatanan (Vizagapatam). The remainder of the fleet reached Faltă at intervals between the 11th and 20th December.

Clive found the force of Kilpatrick so reduced by death, that of the two hundred and thirty men whom that officer had brought with him from Madras the preceding July only about thirty remained alive, and of these not more than ten were fit for duty. By all the fugitives assembled at that last resting-place of British power on the Huglí the arrival of Clive was hailed with joy. That joy was soon to be justified. Acting in conformity with his instructions, Clive's first care, indeed, was to transmit to Mánakchand, Governor of Calcutta, letters from the Government of Madras, from Admiral Watson, and from himself, to be forwarded to the Núwáb. But when he received from that governor a refusal to forward those letters on the ground of their menacing style, he at once, in concert with the Admiral, prepared to carry out his aim by force.

The fleet, leaving Faltá the 27th December, anchored off Moiapúr the following day. The fort of Bajbaj, in close vicinity to this place and only twelve miles from Calcutta, presented the first object of attack. It was arranged that whilst Watson should bombard it with his fleet, Clive should attack it by land.

In carrying out this arrangement there occurred one of those mishaps which bring ruin to an ordinary mortal, but which afford to a man cast in the heroic mould an opportunity for the display of qualities which can change defeat into victory. It happened that whilst events in Southern India had imbued Clive with contempt for the military capacity of native generals, the

issue of the sieges of Kásimbázár and of Calcutta had implanted in the minds of the natives of Bengal a similar disdain for the fighting power of the English. The reader will recollect that previous to the siege of Arkát the same feeling prevailed in Southern India. It was that siege which had drawn from Murári Ráo the confession that the English could fight. If Bajbaj forced the same avowal from the Bengal leader, it brought also to the mind of Clive the conviction that he could not, against his present enemies, afford to relax the rules of ordinary warfare.

It happened in this wise. After a long and fatiguing march of fifteen hours' duration through an uninhabited part of the country, full of swamps and intersected by watercourses, Clive and his troops, two hundred and fifty Europeans and twelve hundred sipáhís, dragging with them, for want of draught cattle, two light field-pieces and a tumbril, arrived, at 8 o'clock on the morning of the 29th December, at a large hollow capable of containing them all. This hollow, the bed of a lake in the rainy season, but now perfectly dry, was about ten feet below the level of the country, and was surrounded by jungle. Immediately on its eastern and southern banks lay an abandoned village and its enclosures. It was situated only a mile from the nearest point to the river, about a mile and a half from Bajbaj, and half a mile from the main road between that place and Calcutta. Clive himself was ill, his men were utterly exhausted—so worn out, indeed, that after they had detached one small body to occupy a village

on the banks of the river, to impose upon the defenders of the fort, and another into the thickets adjoining the main road, they resigned themselves to a profound sleep. Some of the men lay in the village, some under the banks of the hollow: the two field-pieces stood, undefended, on the north side of the village. But all slept, their arms in a heap, sixty yards from the eastern bank, and not a single sentry posted.

They were so sleeping when the army of Mának-chand, composed of fifteen hundred horse and two thousand foot, came upon them. That wily leader, well informed by his spies, had followed the movements of the English force, had surrounded three sides of the hollow, and was waiting patiently till sleep should deliver the invaders into his hands. Had he known the full extent of their fatuity, had he been aware that their arms were lying at a distance of sixty yards from their nearest man, he might have succeeded. Ignorant of this, he waited an hour, then, believing that the proper time had arrived, he caused to be opened on the hollow and the village a continuous matchlock fire. Roused by this, the English at once ran to their arms and formed line on the spot where they had thrown them as they came up. The gunners, in their confusion, instead of repairing to their guns, joined this line, thus leaving their pieces a prey to the enemy. Whilst the men, still hardly awake, were thus scrambling into their places, the enemy, creeping up, had obtained possession of the entire eastern bank of the hollow, and, protected by

this, they now poured a sustained and often murderous fire upon their victims.

Clive, I have said, was ill; he was ill before he had set out on the expedition, and the long night-march had greatly increased his sufferings. But, ill as he was, he proved again here, as he had proved on every trying occasion before, his title to be ranked as a real leader of men. Let the reader take in the situation: the little band surprised, just seizing their arms, their guns lost, they standing huddled together on a bank exposed to a sustained fire from an unseen enemy! It was a time for real leadership—a time for a real man to inspire with his own spirit those doubting groups, standing there to be shot at, and not knowing how to act. But, how many men, roused from their sleep, would have been equal to that sudden inspiration? How many, we are certain, would have been unequal to it, would have been on the same level as the most dazed of their men!

But never did Clive's genius shine more brightly, never was his calmness, his coolness, his perception of things, more apparent than on this trying occasion. He comprehended the situation in an instant. In an instant he acted in the manner which alone would inspire his men with confidence. Feeling that to draw back his men out of fire would in their depressed physical condition certainly cause a panic, he ordered them to stand fast, and, forming them up, detached small parties from the right and centre to drive the enemy from the bank. Advancing under a heavy fire, which caused considerable loss, the centre platoon

reached the bank, then, firing a volley, charged the enemy and drove them towards the village. As they approached this, the right platoon, which had been equally successful in driving back their enemy and with smaller loss, joined them. The charges had proved sufficiently to the enemy that "the English could fight." They fell back rapidly into the jungles, and though they continued thence an intermittent fire, no persuasion could induce them to try conclusions once again in the open. Their chances of success were diminishing every second. For, whilst the events I have described were taking place, the detachment sent to the jungles bordering the main road, having heard the firing, was hastening up. It came on the spot just as the native officers of Mánakchand's army were imploring their men to advance. Its arrival decided everything. It enabled Clive to recover the guns which the enemy had not been able to use. A discharge from these caused the enemy to retire under shelter of his cavalry. Clive then formed up in line, and, supported by his field-pieces, moved against the cavalry led in person by Mánakchand. These stood for a time, but when a shot from one of the guns passed close to the head of their commander, other thoughts came over them. They turned and fled towards Calcutta. Clive then moved towards the village on the banks of the river. There he met Major Kilpatrick and a party despatched to his assistance.

But the surprises of that eventful night were not yet over. Whilst Clive and his troops had been engaged in the manner I have described, the guns of the fleet

had poured upon the ramparts of the fort so heavy a fire that a breach had been effected there. In consequence, however, of the fatigue of the troops, Clive, on reaching the village, determined to delay the assault till the following morning. To aid in that operation, a party of two hundred and fifty sailors, with two 24-pounder guns, were landed in the course of the evening. Some of these sailors who had drunk pretty freely, ventured, as the shades of night fell, to stroll towards the fort. One of them, a man named Strahan, felt his way towards the wall unobserved, discovered the breach, entered it alone, and came suddenly upon a party of the defenders sitting in a circle, smoking and talking. Strahan at once fired his pistol among them, then, drawing his cutlass, exclaimed, "The fort is mine!" following the expression with three hearty cheers. The enemy, however, soon recovered from their surprise, and, perceiving that the intruder was alone, fell upon him. Strahan, however, defended himself with great vigour, whilst he called to his comrades. His cutlass, after doing considerable service, broke off near the hilt when these arrived. The discharge of matchlocks which followed roused some of the 39th and some sipáhís. These came up so continuously that the enemy, after struggling for a time, abandoned the fort, which was then taken possession of by Captain Eyre Coote. At daybreak the following morning its guns gave a salute of welcome to the British fleet.* The only casualty

* The sailor Strahan was brought before the Admiral the following morning to be reprimanded for his breach of discipline.

on the British side was that of Captain Dugald Campbell, who, when marching up at the head of his sipáhís, was mistaken for an enemy, and shot by the sailors.

In war a commander must always be prepared for the unexpected. This freak of a drunken sailor was fraught with momentous consequences. Following as it did so closely upon the events of the morning, it persuaded Mánakchand, not only that the English could fight, but that they were irresistible. He no longer thought himself safe in Calcutta. Accordingly, leaving a garrison of five hundred men in that place, he marched with all convenient speed to join the Núwáb at Murshidábád.

Calcutta, thus virtually abandoned, made only a show of resistance. The fort was taken possession of by a company of the 39th Foot under Captain Eyre Coote (2nd January).

The occasion fanned almost into a flame the differences which had been long smouldering between Clive and Watson. The differences had been based,

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On his being called upon to explain his conduct, Strahan, scratching his head with one hand and holding his hat in the other, replied: "Why, to be sure, sir, it was I that took the fort, and I hope there was no harm in it." When the Admiral then dwelt in a severe tone on the possible consequences of his breach of discipline, and dismissed him with a threat of punishment, Strahan, on rejoining his comrades, exclaimed with an oath, "Well, if I am flogged for this 'ere action, I will never take another fort by myself as long as I live." Dr. Ives, Surgeon of the Admiral's flagship during this expedition, relates that Strahan subsequently called on him in London. He was then a pensioner, and his great ambition was to be appointed cook on board a first-class ship.

partly upon want of sympathy of feeling, partly upon professional jealousy. The Admiral regarded Clive, notwithstanding the Royal Commission he bore, as representing the East India Company alone. Choosing to ignore his rank and his position as commander of the land forces, he treated the senior officer of the detachment of the 39th, Captain Eyre Coote, as the representative of the King's land forces. A feeling, not altogether dissimilar, had manifested itself during the expedition against Gheriah. It was displayed now by an act which might have led to very grave consequences. In sending Eyre Coote to take possession of the fort of Calcutta the Admiral had directed him to hold it as its governor in the name of the King. Clive, arriving immediately afterwards, disputed the validity of this order, refused to acknowledge the Admiral's commission to Eyre Coote, and directed that officer to obey him as his senior. On a reference being made to the Admiral, the latter angrily insisted that Clive should abandon the fort and threatened to fire upon him if he should refuse. The dispute might have had unpleasant consequences, but through the intervention of Captain Latham, a compromise was entered into which virtually conceded all that Clive had demanded. It was arranged that the Admiral, as senior officer, should land and take possession of the fort, and, having done so, should in turn transfer it to Mr. Drake, the civil representative of the East India Company. This arrangement was carried out.

The recapture of Calcutta had been the first object

of the expedition, but it was by no means its main object. Its leaders had in view, by punishing the offender, to secure the Company's possessions against the risk of future attack. They had been directed, moreover, to bear in mind that, in the event of the information reaching them that hostilities had broken out between France and England, it might be advisable to seize the French settlement of Chandranagar. They had received, likewise, general instructions to recoup the Company for the great losses which had been sustained by the unprovoked attack of the Núwáb.

On the very morrow of the recapture of Calcutta, the advisability of taking prompt advantage of the consternation which that event was sure to inspire presented itself to the mind of the leaders of the expedition. The natives of Calcutta, and the adjacent villages, had hailed with joy the return of their English masters. They hastened, then, to inform Mr. Drake that the flight of Mánakchand had produced everywhere the impression that the English were irresistible; that the Núwáb, who had treated as a ridiculous fable the rumour that they would endeavour by force of arms to recover their lost factory, had, in the superabundance of his contempt for them, given furloughs to his soldiers and was in no condition immediately to oppose them; further, that the town of Huglí, twenty-two miles distant, offered, as the commercial emporium and principal granary of the province, the surest means alike of crippling the resources of the Núwáb and of improving the finances of the Company.

Clive, impressed with the value of time as a factor in war, resolved to despatch a force against Hugli before its garrison could be reinforced. In those days the land ways were little known; the river was believed to be deep enough to float vessels of considerable burden for several miles. Accordingly, the troops of the expedition were despatched in five vessels, one of which was a twenty-gun sloop. They were composed of a hundred and fifty men of the 39th and two hundred sipáhís. The command was entrusted to Major Kilpatrick of the Company's service. That officer set out on the 4th January, hoping to gain the place in one tide. But the sloop, unfortunately, stuck on a sand-bank, and remained on it for five days. It was not till the evening of the 9th that the expedition anchored abreast of Hugli.

The delay had given the enemy time which, had they chosen, they might have used to great advantage. The defences of the place were strong, the garrison consisted of two thousand men, and the delay had given opportunity to three thousand horse to approach the place. But these advantages were all thrown away. The ships, commencing to cannonade the place immediately on their arrival, effected a breach before midnight. At daybreak of the 10th the town was taken by storm. But the booty fell far short of the anticipations. It was ascertained that all the more valuable stores had been removed to the Dutch factory of Chinsurah.

It was during the progress of the expedition against Hugli that the authorities in Calcutta received infor-

mation that France had declared war against England. The time of the arrival of the news was opportune. It reached them after all their greatest difficulties had been overcome; after the intricacies of the river navigation had been surmounted; after Calcutta had been taken; when the junction of the French with the Núwáb, though a union still much to be deprecated, would not have the extremely formidable character it would have possessed ten days earlier.

Clive, however, and his colleagues, still saw in this last possibility the greatest danger which, even at that moment, threatened the British interests in Bengal. Holding a strong position on the Huglí, only seventeen miles north of Calcutta, it might be possible for the French, disposing of a force of a hundred and forty Europeans and three hundred sipáhís, to decide, by a sudden appearance on the battle-field, any contest which might ensue between the English and the Núwáb.

This possibility impressed Clive the more, as he believed the French troops to exceed, by more than one-half, the numbers I have mentioned, and which represent those they actually possessed. With such a possible enemy on his flank or rear, how could Clive move forward to meet the Núwáb in the field? It was a contingency not to be thought of. Deeming, then, that of the two enemies, the French were, at the moment, the most formidable, Clive resolved to attempt to conciliate the Núwáb, whilst he should crush the European rivals of his country.

The attempt was made. The Núwáb, however,

would not be conciliated. The storming and sack of his town of Huglí had irritated him beyond measure. He could talk of nothing but revenge. Far, then, from responding favourably to the conciliatory advances of the English, he spurned them with scorn, and levying a very considerable army, despatched a pressing message to the chief of the French colony of Chandranagar to join him in crushing the nation which was as much the enemy of the French as of himself.

The storming of Huglí, then, brought within the range of possibility that very scheme which Clive and his colleagues deemed of all others the scheme most injurious to their interests—an active alliance between the Núwáb and the French.

From the anxiety thus caused by the action of the Núwáb, the French themselves saved Clive. The Governor of Chandranagar, M. Renault de St. Germain, had received orders from his chief at Pondichery that, in the event of a war breaking out between France and England, he was to endeavour to arrange a treaty of neutrality with the representatives of the English in Bengal. Fully sensible of the advantages which an alliance with the Núwáb offered him, he yet did not feel authorised, with the small military force at his disposal, to go beyond his instructions. Instead, then, of responding to the Núwáb's advances, he despatched to Calcutta a proposal that, in spite of the war in Europe, the two nations should abstain from hostilities against each other.

To Clive and Watson, who, as I have already stated,

believed the French force at Chandranagar to be much greater than it really was, this proposition was like a message from heaven. They instantly acceded to its principle, and wrote to request M. Renault to send deputies to Calcutta to arrange the conditions of a treaty of neutrality.

The deputies were sent. They had scarcely arrived, however, when circumstances occurred which entirely changed the dispositions of the English Council towards the French settlement. The Núwáb hastening from Múrshidábád with an army of ten thousand foot and fifteen thousand horse, had, on the 2nd February, arrived before Calcutta. On hearing of his approach Clive, whose army now, by means of European reinforcements, and by levies of natives, consisted of seven hundred European infantry, a hundred artillerymen, and fifteen hundred sipáhís, with fourteen field-pieces, nearly all 6-pounders, had, leaving a garrison in Calcutta, formed an intrenched camp about a mile or more to the northward of the town, near Kásipúr, beyond the Maráthá ditch, and half-a-mile from the river, and had thrown up several strong outposts around it. As the salt-water lake, then much more extensive than at present, came within a mile of the Maráthá ditch, an enemy, marching from the north against Calcutta, would be forced to march within sight of the intrenched camp, and could scarcely avoid exposing his flank to its occupants. It was thus a position whence Clive could, choosing his opportunity, strike a decisive blow.

A skirmish took place the very first day. The

advance-guard of the Núwáb's army were taking up a position on the plain to the right of the Damdam road, and were even beginning to intrench themselves there, when Clive marched with the greater portion of his force, and six guns, to feel them. Taking up a position on their flank he opened out a fire from his guns. The prompt reply from a battery of ten heavy pieces showed him that the enemy were on the alert, and that any further measures would be hazardous. He therefore drew back in good order to his camp.

The next day (3rd February) the Núwáb arrived with his main body, though several of his guns were still behind. He had, in the meanwhile, re-opened negotiations with the Council of Calcutta, and the very morning of his arrival had sent into the fort to request that deputies might be sent to him to arrange terms. The deputies, two Members of Council, were sent. But whether it was that the Núwáb was elevated by that which he must have regarded as the repulse of Clive on the previous day, or whether the late arrival of the deputies—for they had been unable to find his tent till late in the evening—had annoyed him, this is certain, that prior to the conference his attendants treated the two Englishmen with extreme insolence; at the conference he did no more than refer them to his dewán; and, on leaving the conference they were warned by Amíchand*—a Calcutta merchant, who,

* This name is written by Mr. Orme and all earlier historians "Omichund." During the current year, an anonymous writer, reviewing a work on India, has expressed an opinion that it is too late now to ascertain the derivation and proper spelling of this

though from motives of policy in the Núwáb's camp, had suffered greatly from his warfare against the English, and whose sympathies were entirely with the latter—that their personal safety might be in danger. On this they hastened to inform Clive of the state of affairs. Clive at once resolved to attack the Núwáb's camp the following morning.

His first and immediate care was to send an express to Admiral Watson, apprising him of his design and requesting his co-operation. Watson promptly responded by despatching a body of sailors, five hundred and sixty in number, inclusive of officers, all of whom had volunteered for the service, under the command of Captain Warwick, of the "Thunder." These joined the camp at Kásipúr at 2 o'clock in the morning of the 4th February.

The reader who is familiar with the Calcutta of the present day will understand the position of the two armies if I indicate the points upon which their several component parts rested. Of the Núwáb's army the more select troops, commanded by Mír

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name. My friend, Mr. Pincott, my obligations to whom in all matters connected with the origin and spelling of Oriental words I am glad to take this opportunity of acknowledging, has, however, solved the question. "The word Omichund," he writes me, "is derived from the words *amî* (a corruption of *amrita*), 'nectar,' and *chanda*, 'the moon.' The two words combined imply 'the lunar nectar,' there being a superstition that the Moon is the receptacle of the nectar of the gods. For this reason the Moon is also called *sudhánidhi*, 'the ocean of nectar,' and *sudhádhára*, 'the receptacle of nectar.'" The name should, therefore, be spelled "Amíchand."

J'afar, were on the ground within the Maráthá ditch, near Amíchand's garden, in which was the tent of the Núwáb himself. The rest of the army extended without much order from the Maráthá ditch to the salt-water lake; or, speaking roughly, from what is now the Damdam road to Báliganj and Alípúr. Clive, whose head-quarters were near Kásipúr, kept up a double communication with Calcutta; the first by water, the second by a road running along the bank of the river, this latter being supported by a body of troops occupying a post known as Perring's Redoubt, commanding the bridge over the Maráthá ditch at a point close to what is now the Chitpúr suspension bridge. He proposed to march directly on the battery of heavy guns which had baffled him on the 2nd, and which still lay in position to the right of the Damdam road, and, having rendered them powerless, to march straight for the garden in which lay the Núwáb.

At 3 o'clock in the morning Clive set out. Besides the detachment of sailors I have mentioned, five hundred and sixty-nine strong, he had six hundred and fifty European infantry, a hundred European artillerymen, eight hundred sipáhís, and six guns drawn by the sailors. The ammunition was carried by lascars. One half of the sipáhís led the advance, then followed the European infantry, then the guns and the lascars; the remaining half of the sipáhís brought up the rear. Shortly before daybreak the little army came upon the enemy's advanced guards stationed in the ditches of that part of the high-road which leads from the ditch at the head of


TERRITORY OF
CALCUTTA
MDCCLVII.
A Fanning Point
B Governor Mills Garden
C Amichand's Garden
D Sovereapoor
Tents and Huts of the Nawab's Army
RIVER HUGL

the lake to the Maráthá ditch. The guards, after discharging their matchlocks and some rockets, took to flight. One of the rockets almost caused a misfortune to the assailants. Striking the pouch of a sipáhí it exploded its contents; and, the fire communicating itself to the contents of other pouches, very great confusion was caused. Fortunately the enemy were not ready to take advantage of it, and Captain Eyre Coote, who led the grenadiers behind the first line of sipáhís, succeeded in restoring order. The line now advanced, but though the day had by this time broken, a very thick fog, not uncommon even now in the cold-weather months in Bengal, overspread the ground, and completely obscured the objects before the men. Still, however, they pushed on in the direction taken by the fugitives, and reached unopposed a position facing the garden of Amíchand, covered at this point by the Maráthá ditch.

This garden was an inclosure of ground to the right of the Damdam road, beyond the natural line of the Maráthá ditch. That ditch, however, made at this point a sweep which enclosed it on three sides. As the attacking force approached this position they heard—they could still only hear—the approaching sound of charging cavalry. Facing towards the direction of the sound, they waited until it had come quite near, then discharged a volley so deadly that the advance suddenly ceased, to be followed, in a few moments, by the fainter trampling of retreat. It was found that the fire had been delivered at a distance of about thirty yards, and that it had emptied many of

the saddles of the Núwáb's body-guard, a select corps of Mughul horsemen who had been stationed near the garden but outside the ditch.

The fog appeared to increase in intensity ; no one could see an inch in front of him. It was impossible for Clive to direct the march of his troops on any given point. He did not even quite know where he was. Fortune, more than good guidance, directed his steps. About a mile to the south of the garden was a narrow caûseway raised several feet above the level of the country, having a ditch on both sides, and forming a road across the Maráthá ditch into Company's territory. Divining, as well as he could, the direction of this causeway, Clive now felt his way along the ditch, marching very slowly, his infantry firing by platoons in all directions, his guns also firing obliquely to the front. Proceeding in this manner, and meeting no opposition, Clive at last reached the causeway. He knew at once where he was; that it was the very point which he had designed to reach; that, crossing it, and making a sharp turn to the right he must reach the unprotected face of Amíchand's garden. That it was barricaded was probable, but a determined rush would break down the barricade. He now clearly saw his way.

It will be understood that marching, feeling his way along the ditch, as he had been, Clive, on reaching the head of the causeway, would have to make a sharp turn to the right to cross it. He gave his directions accordingly. But whether he had omitted to transmit those orders to his artillerymen, who, from the right

and left of the line towards its rear, had been firing to the front—rather obliquely, to avoid their own men, but still to the front—or whether the officer to whom he entrusted them had not delivered them, this is certain, that the artillery-fire did not cease. The consequence was that no sooner had the leading division of his force, consisting of sipáhís, taken ground on the causeway than they were mowed down by the fire of their own field-pieces from the right rear. The leading files, surprised and panic-stricken, then rushed for refuge into the ditch, followed thither, helter skelter, by the main body. Clive was at once on the spot, endeavouring to rally his men, but the thick fog added to the difficulty, for he found that the darkness had added much to the panic caused by the surprise. He succeeded, however, in forming the men into a column on the side of the ditch along which they had been marching, and then faced them so that they might storm the barricade at the other end of the causeway* as soon as he should receive reports from the officers sent to examine it. Unhappily, another surprise was yet in store for him. The enemy had mounted two heavy guns on a bastion along the line

* Orme—and he is followed by others—states that the men rushed across the causeway, and forming on the other side, prepared to attack the barricade. But this would have been impossible, for the barricade guarded the further end of the causeway. Orme's subsequent narrative proves that the causeway never was crossed. It is curious, too, that the plan which accompanies Orme's description gives a direct contradiction on this point to the words in his text.

of the ditch, and which enfiladed the passage of the causeway. Well aware, by the fire of their muskets and guns, of the propinquity of Clive, they divined the course he proposed to follow, and, directing their guns on the spot where they had reason to believe his force was massing itself in column, they suddenly discharged their pieces loaded with grape. The effect was very great. Twenty-two Europeans were killed or wounded, and, a second discharge, less deadly but still death-bearing, soon following, the column was thrown into inextricable confusion. Clive abandoned then the idea of storming the causeway, and extending his troops, resumed his march in the direction he had quitted, in the hope of gaining a road known to be about half a mile in advance, and which, crossing the Maráthá ditch into the Company's territory, formed the main road and avenue leading to Calcutta.* The country between the outer end of the raised causeway and the road towards which the force now tried to make its way, was laid out in rice-fields, each enclosed by a separate bank. It was found impossible to lift the guns over these banks; they were, therefore, dragged along the ditches which had been made to form the banks. This not only caused great labour and considerable delay, but it necessitated a constant change of direction. The troops, dispirited and fatigued, were engaged at this work when, at 9 o'clock, the fog began to lift. Noticing, then, that the enemy's

* This main road and avenue now runs from Lall Bazar to the Circular road by Bow Bazaar and Boitakannah.

horsemen were hovering all about them, and gradually closing in, Clive detached platoons to both flanks to keep them at a distance. But the lifting of the fog had disclosed to the enemy, likewise, his apparently forlorn condition; and the two guns which had caused so much mischief at the causeway, and which had never been wholly silent, were able to take a new and surer aim. Another battery of two heavy guns to which he had necessarily exposed his flank, likewise took up the refrain. It was under these difficulties that, after more than an hour's hard labour, and after abandoning two of his field-pieces, which had broken down, he reached the road at which he was aiming. This road, the reader will recollect, crosses the Maráthá ditch. Once across the Maráthá ditch, two courses would be open to Clive: he could either penetrate into Amíchand's garden from its open side, or could march into the Calcutta fort. But to cross the Maráthá ditch, to accomplish at this road that which he had failed to accomplish at the causeway, was the first necessity. Up to this moment he had been marching through the Núwáb's camp, parallel with the line of the ditch; but on reaching the point where he now was he had to wheel his whole column to the right, and cross the ditch by the road forming a right angle with his previous line of advance. On reaching this road, then, he formed his troops in column to the right, and advanced. For men who had been seven hours afoot, finding their way in darkness through an enemy's camp, seeing no opponents, but made by many casualties bitterly conscious of an opponent's

close vicinity, the task was no easy one. There were cannon on both flanks, cavalry and infantry in their front, cavalry and infantry in their rear. Their one chance of success lay in their going forward. Happily no one was more impressed with this necessity than their leader; happily, too, the officers and men who fought on that day were men upon whom he could rely in any emergency.

Clive, having formed his column to the right, pushed along the road, across the ditch, to attack the strong body of cavalry and infantry drawn up on the further side of it. But whilst he attacked these, a larger body of the enemy's horsemen attacked his rear with great fury, and, for a moment, succeeded in capturing one of his field-pieces. Had the enemy in front resisted, the situation would have been more than critical; but the fire of the leading platoons dispersed these, and Ensign Yorke of the 39th Foot having, by a gallant charge of his platoon, recovered the captured gun, the whole party crossed the ditch. Clive was now master of his movements. Considering however, the fatigued condition of his troops, he resolved to renounce the movement against Amí-chand's garden and to retire into the fort. This resolution he carried out, and though harassed for a considerable distance by the enemy's cavalry and artillery, he reached Calcutta about noon. Towards evening he returned, unmolested, to Kásipúr. His losses had been considerable. They amounted to fifty-seven killed, of whom thirty-nine were Europeans, and a hundred and seventeen wounded, of whom

eighty-two were Europeans. The greater part of these casualties were caused by the guns which played upon the force at the causeway and during its march across the rice-fields from the causeway to the road.

Clive's attack on the Núwáb's camp must be regarded from two points of view. As a military operation it was a failure. Clive did not carry out either of the two objects he had proposed to himself when he set out. He did not capture the enemy's battery of heavy guns, and he did not attack Amí-chand's garden. Far from that, he made the tour, apparently the useless and disastrous tour, of the enemy's camp, to find, after ten hours of terrible fatigue, that he had lost in killed and wounded more than one-tenth of his army. His plan then, however good it may have been in theory, had failed. The failure may partly be attributed, and with a great deal of plausibility, to the fog. It is certainly impossible to carry out a precise and difficult manœuvre in total darkness. But it is an argument which cuts both ways. The same fog which hindered his movements affected to the same extent the movements of his enemy.

In a military sense it must be admitted, then, Clive's plan failed completely. Did it deserve to succeed? This is a question which was asked keenly at the time, and which was answered generally, I might almost say universally, in the negative. Clive's plan involved, under any circumstances, the long exposure of his right flank to the batteries raised

on the ditch. It involved, in fact, a march through the enemy's camp, exposed to an enfilading fire, to be followed by the storming of the passage across the ditch. It is curious he should have preferred a plan so fraught with danger when one so much more simple was at his very hand. The reader will recollect that his camp at Kásipúr was connected with Calcutta by a road which led along the river bank, and which crossed the Maráthá ditch by a bridge almost at the same point as the Chitpúr suspension bridge of the present day, guarded by a fort known as Perring's Redoubt. By this bridge he had free entrance within the ditch, at a point not more than half a mile from the unfortified entrance into Amíchand's garden. Mr. Orme expresses the general opinion of the time when he says, that if Clive had crossed by that bridge he might have marched to Amíchand's garden "on a spacious road capable of admitting twelve or fifteen men abreast, on the left exposed, indeed, to the annoyance of matchlocks from some enclosures, where, however, cavalry could not act, but their left would have been defended by the rampart of the Maráthá ditch, contiguous to which the road lies; their only danger would have been in front, from the onsets of cavalry, and the discharge of what pieces of cannon the enemy had got near the garden." It seems to me impossible to gainsay the conclusions thus summarised by Mr. Orme.

On the other hand, looking at the operation from a political point of view, it may seem to justify the judgment passed on it by later writers. Colonel

Arthur Broome, who had studied the subject deeply, and who was well capable of forming an opinion upon it, whilst admitting that the operations were condemned by the troops as rash, ill-concerted, and entailing an unnecessary waste of life, pronounces the plan to have been "bold and judicious—such a display of energy being well calculated to strike terror into the mind of the Núwáb." No doubt, regard being had to the results, the operation may be justified. The only question is whether the same or greater terror might not have been stricken into the mind of the Núwáb by the easier march suggested by Mr. Orme, leading directly to his very tent. Still, judging by the political results, the work of the 4th February morning was a success—a marked and striking success. If the end justifies the means, the military action of Clive on that day was even more than justified.

The results were, indeed, marvellous. The military tour which had decimated the army of Clive, had inflicted a far greater numerical loss on the army of the Núwáb. Against Clive's total of a hundred and seventy-four killed and wounded, there were to be set thirteen hundred of the Núwáb's troops. Amongst the latter were two noblemen of high rank and twenty-two of lesser note.

These losses, and the unaccustomed propinquity to danger—perhaps, too, the dash and daring of the march through the very heart of his camp—terrified the Núwáb. He sent to the English camp the next morning a letter in which, whilst complaining of the

conduct of the English, he offered definite proposals for a peace. The reply of Clive is worthy of study. It affords a marvellous proof of the clearness with which he had read the character of Asiatics. The reader must bear in mind that Calcutta was virtually beleaguered, that supplies were running short, that the demonstration of the previous day had really been a failure. But between the lines of the Núwáb's letter, in the very fact of his writing at all, Clive read that the besiegers did not look upon it as a failure. He at once took up the tone; assured the Núwáb in his reply that he had simply marched his troops through His Highness's camp to show him of what British soldiers were capable; but that he had been careful to avoid hurting anyone, except those who had actually opposed his progress. He concluded by expressing his willingness to accede to the Núwáb's proposal regarding negotiations. The "swagger"—for such it was—of this reply was exactly suited to the man and to the occasion. The Núwáb took in every word of it. If the destruction and demoralisation he had witnessed were the effect but of a march through his camp, what might not be the result of a serious attack? Reasoning thus, he at once drew off his army to a position about three miles to the north of the salt-water lake beyond Damdam. Continuing from that point the negotiations, he finally, on the 9th February, concluded with the English a treaty to the effect that all the privileges granted by former firmans, including the grant of some neighbouring villages, should be acknowledged; that all goods passing and

repassing through the country, by land or water in Bengal, Bahár, or Orísá, with English passes, should be free from tax of any kind; that all the Company's factories, and all moneys and property belong to the Company or its servants and tenants, seized or taken by the Núwáb or his officers, should be restored or made good; that permission should be granted to the English to fortify Calcutta in such manner as they might think proper; that the right of coining money should be assured to them. On their part the English covenanted to transact the business of their factories within the jurisdiction of the Núwáb in the same manner as formerly; never to do violence to any person without cause; never to give protection to any-one having accounts with the Núwáb, to murderers, or to robbers; to carry on their trade in its former channel, and never to deviate from the agreement they were then signing. Two days later, the 11th February, the Núwáb began his march towards his capital, not, however, before he had commissioned Amíchand to propose to the English a further treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, against all enemies.

Whatever criticism may be passed on the military dispositions of the 4th February, it is impossible to question the enormous value of the results which they obtained. Never has there been more vividly illustrated the power of moral force wielded by a strong nature. The student of the campaigns of 1796–97 will recollect more than one illustration of the same power. It was evidenced, for example, when, after the defeat of Alvinzi, a French officer at the head of a

party of a hundred and fifty men, suddenly encountered eighteen hundred Austrians. Assuming an air of superiority, the young officer so dominated the spirits of these Austrians, that they laid down their arms. The previous victories of the French had ruined the *morale* of their enemy. Similarly the daring displayed by Clive on the 4th February had crushed the spirit of the Núwáb. The action which his own soldiers condemned, which competent military critics, judging it artistically, must condemn, as a useless promenade involving a needless expenditure of blood, was in reality, regard being had to its effects on the enemy, equal to a victory.

Certainly, it produced all the results of a victory. It produced results greater than any which Clive, in his most sanguine moments, had dared to hope for. The treaty—the march homewards—these were the natural consequences of the fear inspired by British daring. But that message sent by Amíchand—that proposal for an alliance offensive and defensive!

Not even in his brightest visions had hope dangled the possibility of such an alliance before the soul of the youthful conqueror! Yet never did proposal more satisfy the secret yearnings of a heart than did this proposal the heart of Clive!

The fact is that the long contest waged between the French and English in Southern India—a contest in which he had borne a part so conspicuous—had impressed Clive with the conviction that the French were the most dangerous enemy to English interests in every part of India. In his recent contest with Siráju'd

daulah he had been throughout haunted by the fear of the danger to which his countrymen would be exposed if the French, throwing off their neutrality, were to combine with the Núwáb. There can, I think, be no question but that, had Clive been a Frenchman, and had he commanded at Chandranagar, he would have seized that opportunity to crush the rivals of his country. Renault, the actual governor, had, it is true, let the opportunity slip. But the Núwáb, Clive knew well, had only been frightened. Distance from the scene of danger, the lapse of a few days or weeks, would remove or greatly weaken the impression. He might return; and, then, under fresh instructions from Pondichery—whither it was known France was despatching a formidable force under one of her most promising young generals—Renault, or possibly, a more resolute successor to Renault, might tear up the treaty, and join in an attempt to crush once again the British settlement at Calcutta. Clive, in fact, looked upon Chandranagar as the Scipios of Rome looked upon Carthage. Before even he had attacked Huglí, he had, in his heart, resolved that the French settlement must be destroyed.

How, in the first instance, he had temporised, and gladly temporised, I have already related. But the danger which had rendered that temporising policy a political necessity having passed away, the desire to rid himself of the one rival who had it in his power to drive, on any sudden opportunity, a knife into the vitals of his countrymen, returned with double force to Clive.

For a moment, indeed, there came to perplex him the fear lest the Núwáb might forbid hostilities, or, if the English were to undertake them, would unite with the French. But just at this conjuncture, when he was deliberating, now doubting, now hoping, as to the course he should pursue, there came Amíchand with the Núwáb's proposal for an offensive and defensive alliance. Was it possible for any message to be more opportune? In a second Clive had taken his part. Signing at once the treaty of offensive and defensive alliance, he commissioned Amíchand to return forthwith and ascertain from the Núwáb if he would sanction an attack upon the French settlement of Chandranagar.

Had the Núwáb been a strong man he would at once have put down his foot and said, "This thing shall not be." He possessed sufficient military force then to say this. He was nearer to Chandranagar than Clive was, and the spoken word would have been sufficient. All his interests incited him to this course. He hated the English. He knew that policy demanded the maintenance of an equilibrium between the rival settlers. The French had always been docile and submissive. Why, then, did he not pursue the course dictated by policy? The answer is patent; he had not recovered from the effect of Clive's march through his camp on the 4th February!

Unwilling to yield the permission, fearing openly to refuse it, the Núwáb adopted the course which weak men always have adopted, and, to the end of time, always will adopt. He temporised. He did not

refuse permission; he did not grant it; he simply evaded a decisive answer. In his reply he referred to a report, then current, that M. Bussy, supported by a French squadron, would soon reach Bengal; advised Clive to be on his guard; authorised him to adopt measures to prevent the French from obtaining a further footing in the province; requested the loan of English gunners to work his guns and train his troops; and concluded by asking that Mr. Watts, one of the senior officers of the factory, and whom he liked for his suave and pleasant manners, might be deputed to his court as representative of the Company. The English at once promised to comply with the request regarding the gunners and Mr. Watts. The Núwáb then resumed his march towards Murshidábád.

The evasive character of the Núwáb's reply to the main question submitted to him combined with his immediate march towards his capital to confirm the secret resolution of Clive. The reader will recollect that when the English Council of Calcutta gladly agreed to the proposition of neutrality made by the French, they requested M. Renault to despatch deputies to Calcutta for the purpose of discussing and signing a treaty carrying out that aim. The French deputies had now been some days in Calcutta; the conditions of the treaty had been agreed upon; the treaty required only signature. Clive, however, under several pretexts, had deferred its final consideration. When the answer of the Núwáb reached him he determined not to sign. Making as speedily as

possible his military arrangements, he crossed the Huglí with his whole available force on the 18th February, a few miles above Calcutta, and prepared to march on Chandranagar.

But, meanwhile, the suspicion of the French had been aroused. Not only the deputies in Calcutta, but M. Renault himself, had divined the reason for the delays in signing the treaty, accompanied, as they were, by preparations which could only be intended against themselves. Before even Clive had crossed the river Renault had, therefore, sent messengers to the Núwáb to make strong representations regarding the danger which would accrue to him if the English were to strengthen themselves by the annihilation of the only European rival at all formidable, and to show him that the English, freed from the restraint of his presence, were now about to attempt that annihilation. These messengers reached the Núwáb at Agardíp, forty miles south of Murshidábád.

It is probable that time, short as it had been, and distance, had caused to evaporate the dread caused by Clive's bold raid of the 4th February. Certainly the intelligence brought by the French messengers inspired Siráju'd daulah with feelings very different to those which had animated him on the morrow of the combat. It made him very angry. He saw clearly the danger to himself with which the contemplated proceedings of the English were fraught.

He at once wrote to Calcutta a letter in which he peremptorily forbade the English to wage war with their European rivals or to commit any act of hostility

against them. To mark his determination to prevent any such action by force of arms, he despatched fifteen hundred men to strengthen the garrison of Huglí, and instructed his general there, Nandkumár, to render the French every assistance in the event of his being attacked. Further, he despatched a lakh of rupees to M. Renault to aid him in his preparations for defence.

The language of the Núwáb was too decided to admit of any open hesitation on the part of those to whom it was addressed. Clive was not yet prepared to invite the simultaneous hostility of two enemies. Were he now to attack Chandranagar, that place, certain of support, might resist long enough to enable the Núwáb to act in a decisive manner against the English whilst he were yet before the besieged place. Whilst, then, urging his representative, Mr. Watts, and his native agent, Amíchand, who had likewise accompanied the Núwáb, to relax no efforts, to neglect no opportunity, of working upon the mind of Siráju'd daulah, Clive authorised them openly to announce to him that he accepted his decision and would undertake no hostile measures against the French.

And, in fact, Clive and the Calcutta Council did, for the moment, renounce the idea. As a proof of their sincerity, they resolved to sign the treaty of neutrality. That treaty had been passed by the select committee appointed to consider it, had been written out fairly, and was ready for signature. It was about to be signed when an unexpected difficulty arose.

Admiral Watson was the senior officer representing the Crown in Calcutta. In rank he was superior to Clive. Between the two men there had never existed very great cordiality. The Admiral had always regarded the self-made soldier as an interloper into His Majesty's service. Disputes regarding the right of Clive to a commander's share of prize-money had broken out even at Gheriah, and we have seen that at Calcutta Admiral Watson had insulted him by recognising before himself an officer of the 39th, serving under his orders, as the military representative of the Crown. On the occasion of the signature of the French treaty the difference was to break out again. The Núwáb had, since his halt at Agardíp, despatched every day to Clive letters in which he had renewed his positive prohibition to attack the French settlement. The increased decision in tone, and combined with that, too, the probability that his own presence would soon be required in Southern India to oppose the French troops expected under Lally, had for the moment changed his views regarding the policy of an immediate attack on Chandranagar. Certain of having the Núwáb on his hands if he were to attempt that attack, he was now more anxious than anyone that the treaty should be signed. It is impossible to say how far Clive's anxiety to sign may have stimulated Watson's disinclination, but it is certain that the more strongly the one course was urged by Clive the more vehemently the Admiral argued in favour of its opposite. The objection he took was at least plausible. "No treaty," he argued, in so many words, "can be binding with

Chandranagar until it be ratified by Pondichery. Calcutta is an independent, Chandranagar is a dependent, settlement. If we sign a treaty, then, with Chandranagar, we bind our own hands, we do not bind those of our rival." Considering that the rival was the suppliant to have his hands bound, the objection, though, doubtless, sound in law, was more plausible than solid. With respect to the real issues under consideration, it was nothing more than a legal quibble. The French, who had only a hundred and forty-six European soldiers at Chandranagar, would be formidable only if, when confident of the support of the Núwáb's army, they were to be attacked by the English. The Admiral, however, insisted on his objection. His colleagues used all their efforts to make him give way, but in vain. The scenes in the council-room became in consequence very stormy. In the heat of the altercation, Clive told Watson that only one of two courses was open to him, to sign the treaty or to go and capture Chandranagar. But the Admiral was not to be moved; the treaty remained unsigned. Days were passed in fruitless arguments, which ended only in confirming each disputant in his own opinion.

The delays thus caused worked in favour of the Admiral. It happened that just at this time the news of the invasion of India and the occupation of Dihlí by Ahmad Sháh Duráni reached the camp of the Núwáb. Terrified, fearing the further progress of the invader, believing that Bengal itself was threatened, the Núwáb wrote a pressing letter to Clive urging him to

march at once to his assistance, and offering him a hundred thousand rupees a month for the expenses of his troops. In this letter he made no mention of Chandranagar.

The very same day which saw Clive receive it, brought him also information that Commodore James with three ships, having on board two companies of European infantry, a detachment of European, and a company of native, artillery, had arrived from Bombay at the mouth of the Huglí; further, that the "Cumberland," with the remaining portion of the 39th on board, and which had parted from the Admiral's squadron after leaving Madras, had arrived at Báleswar.

Clive felt now that he was quite independent of the Núwáb, that he could act, if necessary, in defiance of his threats. Another circumstance came at the same moment to shake off the last link of the chain. Whilst Watson had been disputing with the Council, the wily Amíchand had been pursuing his own natural method to advance the interests of his English masters. Placed in communication with Nandkumár, governor of Huglí for the Núwáb and commander of his troops, he had persuaded that officer that his true interests lay in forbearing to offer any real opposition to an attack which might be made by Clive on his European rival.

Thus, practically unfettered, feeling himself strong enough now to meet the Núwáb should he dare to assist the French, Clive returned more strongly than before to his old plan of attacking Chandranagar.

The Calcutta Council consisted of Mr. Drake, the governor, Mr. Beecher, Major Kilpatrick, and Clive. Up to this moment the first three had voted persistently with Clive for concluding the treaty of neutrality. But now opinions veered round. Clive declared for the bolder measure, and carried with him his military colleague; Beecher, a weak man, declined to give an opinion either way; whilst Drake, weaker still, recorded a minute so full of casuistry, that it was not clear to which side his opinion inclined. His opinion was, therefore, voted to be no opinion at all, and the Council decided in favour of the expedition.

There remained, yet, Admiral Watson. Still in the mood which had ruled his controversy with Clive, the Admiral refused now to consent to the measure unless the consent of the Núwáb were previously obtained. To gain that consent, however, he agreed to write to that prince a letter in which he dwelt upon the shortcomings of the French, accused the Núwáb of assisting them with men and money—of not having carried out the treaty of the 9th February with regard to compensation and restitution, and threatening that if arrangements were not made within ten days for fully performing those promises, he would send to the coast for more ships and "would kindle such a flame in the country as all the waters of the Ganges would not be able to extinguish." This letter reached the Núwáb when he was still under the influence of the terror caused by the invasion of the Afghán prince. The insolence of its terms, instead of rousing his wrath, increased his apprehensions. He replied in a

style which might be termed even abject. He denied having assisted the French, pledged himself to carry out without delay the terms of the treaty, and, with reference to the projected attack on Chandranagar, used words which could be construed as giving full assent: "You," he wrote, "have understanding and generosity. If your enemy, with an upright heart, claim your protection, you will give him life; but you must be well satisfied with the innocence of his intention. If not, whatever you think, that do." The last sentence removed the last scruple of Admiral Watson. It was in vain, the day following, that the Núwáb, satisfied by news from the north-west that no danger was to be apprehended from the Afgháns, wrote in the most positive terms to forbid the attack. The Admiral, proceeding from the extreme of doubt to the extreme of resolution, was now as eager as Clive for the expedition, and treated the second letter as an insult.

On receiving from the Núwáb the application for aid against the Afgháns, Clive had replied that he would proceed to join him as soon as the news of invasion should be confirmed, and that meanwhile he would march as far as Chandranagar. His army had at once, then (7th March), broken up from the position it had occupied on the spot, now known as Haurah, and had advanced very slowly in the direction of the French territory. The detachments arrived in the ships were, at the same time, landed and pushed on with all speed to join the main body. Clive calculated that within a week he would be in a position to strike the contemplated blow.

The situation of the French governor, M. Renault de St. Germain, whilst the debates in the Calcutta Council and the negotiations with the Núwáb were proceeding, may be easily imagined. A peace-loving and honourable man, he had taken the earliest measures, after the re-occupation of Calcutta by the English, to secure with that people a cordial understanding on the terms of neutrality between both nations in Bengal. How that offer was welcomed when the English were in distress, how it had been looked upon with doubtful favour when the causes of that distress had been removed, I have already recorded. Still, up to the last Renault had hoped. Well aware, through his agents, of the opposition against the treaty raised in Calcutta, he had received from the Núwáb and from his general at Huglí, Nandkumár, the fullest assurances of protection. For a long time, then, he felt only that lesser kind of anxiety which harasses a man who, feeling confident that a certain event will happen, is longing every hour to hear that it has happened. But when his agents from Calcutta returned with the unsigned treaty, when he learned from them that the arrival of fresh troops and the terror of the Núwáb had removed from the English their last scruple, and that their troops were actually moving towards the French territory, that lesser anxiety gave place at once to indignation. Not, indeed, that he felt any confidence in his power successfully to resist, unaided, the English force. But hope had not entirely abandoned him. If even Nandkumár would threaten the besiegers, his resistance

might avail till the Núwáb himsèlf should arrive. Despatching, then, the most pressing entreaties to Nandkumár and the Núwáb, Renault made vigorous preparations to receive the advancing enemy.

The settlement of Chandranagar occupied a tract about a mile and a half in breadth, working inland from the river, having a length of about two miles along its bank. Almost in the very centre of this length, and some thirty yards from the river, had been built the fort. This fort, called Fort d'Orléans, was a square of about a hundred and twenty yards, mounting on each of its four bastions ten 32-pounder guns. On the curtains facing the river and the south, 24-pounders were mounted at regular intervals. Near the angle formed by these two faces was a ravelin, covering the water-gate and extending to the bank of the river. On this ravelin eight 32-pounders were mounted. But the fort possessed other means of defence besides these. As soon as Renault heard of the march of the English troops, he converted the flat terrace of the church into a battery and armed it with six guns. He began also to dig a ditch and throw up a glacis all round the fort; to demolish all the buildings within a hundred yards of it, and to erect batteries beyond the foot of the glacis on the northern, western, and southern sides commanding the approaches from which the greatest danger was to be apprehended. Besides this, to render impossible an attack from the English ships, Renault gave directions for the sinking of several ships in the only navigable channel, about a hundred and fifty yards

south of the fort, a point commanded by the guns of one of the batteries. Unfortunately, the officer who was trusted with the execution of this order purposely carried out his instructions in a very inefficient manner. Leaving a narrow channel by which ships could pass, he deserted to the English. The French garrison consisted of a hundred and forty-six* French troops and three hundred sipáhís; but the European population and the sailors of the merchant vessels, to the number of about three hundred, had been hastily formed into a kind of militia, and had been armed. These, however, had had but little training.

Meanwhile, Clive's little army, numbering seven hundred European and fifteen hundred native infantry, was marching steadily on, the artillery, now increased to a hundred and fifty, proceeding in boats, escorted by Admiral Watson with three ships of war and several smaller vessels. On the 14th, Clive approached Chandranagar. Ascertaining, however, that the French had thrown up batteries commanding the approaches from the south and from the river side, he took ground to the west; then making a *détour*, he entered the French territory by

* Orme, and, following Orme, Broome, and other writers, have placed the number of European troops at three hundred. But, through the courtesy of Monsieur Derussat, then Chief of the French establishments in Bengal, I enjoyed, in 1867, the opportunity of examining all the old records of Chandranagar. The numbers in the text are taken from the official returns of the period. Their correctness, therefore, cannot be questioned.

the road leading from that direction to the northern face of the fort. Renault had already placed a four-gun battery, commanded by the north-west bastion, on this road. As soon, moreover, as he had detected the intentions of Clive, he sent out strong detachments to keep the enemy in check. The men forming these detachments availed themselves to the utmost of their local knowledge of the country, but as Clive still advanced, they fell back, and finally formed up in rear of the battery. Their retreat allowed the English to take possession of houses and other buildings which Renault had had no time to destroy, and from the shelter of these they poured, and continued for several hours to pour, so sustained a fire, that at nightfall the French spiked the guns of the battery and retired within the fort. The abandonment of this battery rendered necessary the evacuation of the four others to the south of the fort, for these were now liable to be turned. The French, therefore, withdrew the guns from these during the night.

Clive spent the next day in establishing his troops firmly in the town and in the buildings on the southern esplanade, suffering but little from the fire directed against him from the fort. On the 16th he landed his guns and stores, opened fire on the 17th, and, on the 18th, continuing the fire, occupied the deserted battery on the river face and armed it with three 24-pounders. These opened fire on the 19th against the south flank and face of the north-east bastion. The defenders, during the three first days, had plied their guns with great spirit and vigour, and, being

sheltered behind solid defences, whilst the English fought behind brick buildings, improvised as batteries for the occasion, the results, in killed and wounded, had been rather to their advantage.

Whilst thus gallantly defending himself, Renault still maintained his hope in two causes, which might yet turn the scale very decidedly in his favour—the grounding of the English ships of war in the blocked-up channel, and the approach of the Núwáb, or at all events of Nandkumár. Could he but avert the fire of the men-of-war, he could hold out sufficiently long against the land-forces till the Núwáb should take up a position which would force Clive to retire.

These were reasonable hopes, hopes embodying a result which was easily within the possibilities. If treason and corruption had not intervened, Renault would have forced Clive to retire. But, alas! treason in the first instance had done its work, corruption had completed it in the other. On the 19th the three men-of-war, the "Kent" of sixty-four guns, the "Tiger" of sixty, and the "Salisbury" of fifty guns, admirably navigated by Captain Speke of the "Kent," had anchored just below the channel which Renault believed he had blocked up. Meanwhile the French engineer who had deserted to Clive had reported that if the Admiral would carefully sound all around the sunken vessels, he would find that there was still left sufficient room for ships to pass the channel singly. Soundings, made, during the succeeding days, under a heavy fire, proved this information to be correct. It was not, however, till the 23rd that Watson was able to attempt the passage.

The four days which intervened were spent by Clive and the defenders in exchanging a very vigorous fire alike from small arms and heavy guns. The result went far to show that, putting the ships out of consideration, the French were equal to the task of repelling Clive; that, if the Núwáb were true to his engagements, Chandranagar might even become the grave of the English. During those four days, in fact, the fire from the ramparts silenced the three-gun battery of the English, and brought down a house close to a five-gun battery which they were erecting, injuring several men and retarding the completion of that work. The losses of the defenders were all this time slight indeed. The Admiral was still engaged in his soundings. If the Núwáb would but come all would still be well with the defenders.

The Núwáb was in a position most embarrassing for a weak man. He was called upon to decide promptly and to act energetically. All his interests pointed to quick decision and energetic action. He certainly hated the English, and he especially hated and feared Clive, "the daring in war upon whom may bad fortune attend." He knew that to allow the French to be crushed was opposed to his interests. He knew that such an opportunity of repaying the insults of the raid through his camp and of this attack on Chandranagar, made in spite of his orders, would never recur. He had every wish to support the French. What, then, held him back?

The cause which tended most decisively to hold the Núwáb's hands at this crisis, a crisis affecting him

and his race even more than it affected the French, was the same cause which had already inverted the position of the European and Native in Southern India. There a series of events had caused the moral power to pass from those who had been, and were still nominally, lords of the soil, to the traders who had come, for the purposes of trade only, from Europe. There, one battle had caused that inversion. The same effect had been produced in Bengal when, on the 4th February, Clive, on a foggy morning, made the tour of the Núwáb's camp. Ill-planned and ill-conducted as was that military raid, its effect had been decisive on the mind of the ruler of Bengal. The prince who had regarded Europeans as dogs, whose officers, without punishment or rebuke, had consigned many of them to a lingering death in the Black Hole, had been made, by that raid, to tremble at the very name of Clive.

It was moral, not physical, fear, then, which made the Núwáb hesitate on this supreme occasion. Clive had daunted him. It is certain that he was very angry; that he felt mocked, insulted, defied. This conviction was brought acutely home to him when the messengers whom he despatched day after day, sometimes twice and thrice a day, bearing letters to Clive, ordering him, first not to attack, then to cease the attack, returned with the information that the siege was still vigorously prosecuted. But moral fear acting on his weak nature prevented him from acting promptly and decisively. Like all weak men, driven to do something, he had recourse to a compromise—

a word which so often signifies a measure which irritates but does not decide. Under this impulse, whilst threatening Clive with his letters, and remaining halted himself, he detached one of his generals, Rájá Dúlab Rám, with a considerable force, to aid the French.

Rájá Dúlab Rám marched and arrived within twenty miles of Huglí in sufficient time, had he pushed on, to save Chandranagar. But there came then into action the successful intrigues which the English had carried on with Nandkumár. That high officer, bribed by Amíchand, sent messengers to the Rájá to urge him to halt where he was; to assure him that if he were to push on he would incur the hostility of the English to no purpose; that Chandranagar was on the point of surrendering. Had the Rájá disregarded this message and pushed on to Huglí, he would have discovered the truth—that he was yet in ample time—for Huglí is about four miles from Chandranagar; but he suffered himself to be persuaded, and withheld an assistance which, given promptly, would have greatly influenced the future.

Thus did one of the two supports upon which Renault rested fail him at the very moment of his sorest need. Nor did the other prove more stable. By the evening of the 22nd the Master of the "Kent," Mr. John Delamotte, reported to the Admiral that he had sounded all around the ships sunk by the French, and that the passage, reported by the engineer deserter to be in existence, was actually there. Early the next morning, accordingly, Watson weighed

anchor. The "Tiger," leading, made her way successfully through the passage, and, clearing with one broadside the ravelin of its defenders, took up a position abreast of the north-east bastion, and, anchoring there, poured in a heavy fire from her guns, and from small arms from the tops. The "Kent," less fortunate, was letting go her anchor opposite the ravelin, when the guns from the curtain treated her so severely, that, in the confusion which followed, the cable ran out its full length, and the ship dropped from her allotted post till she anchored with her poop exposed to a heavy cross-fire, the fire from the south-east bastion being supplemented by that from the south-west. This accident threw out the "Salisbury," which was forced to anchor a hundred and fifty yards below the fort. The French stood well to their guns. Monsieur de Vignes, commander of one of the French ships which had been sunk, and who, at the beginning of the siege, had been placed in charge of the bastions, directed the fire with great skill and judgment, and inspired all around him with his own courage and energy. The duel between the "Tiger" and the north-east bastion was fought on both sides with great desperation, and for a long time with equal fortune. That between the two bastions and the "Kent," maintained with equal vigour, seemed at first likely to prove advantageous to the French. The flank-fire from the south-west bastion galled that ship so severely, that the Admiral at last concentrated upon it a heavy fire from all the lower-deck guns which could be brought to bear in that direction. This fire, kept up for some

time, silenced for a few minutes the fire of the bastion. But de Vigne, who fought with a courage and coolness worthy of all admiration, was not to be baffled. Pointing all his guns to one particular spot, he concentrated on that spot a fire so heavy that the English ship ignited. The ignition spread, and being attributed by the crew to other causes, produced so great a panic amongst them, that seventy or eighty men jumped from the port-holes into the boats alongside. The officers, however, and the cooler heads amongst the men, exerted themselves so manfully that the fire was quickly extinguished; the others then at once returned on board.

After a tremendous cannonade, lasting two hours, victory began to declare for the English. One after the other the guns on the fort were dismounted, and the fire began necessarily to slacken. Renault, who had long known that his case was hopeless, prepared to meet it with the same courage and resolution which had characterised all his movements. Of his hundred and forty-six soldiers, about thirty had been killed and double that number wounded. There remained, then, some fifty. Collecting these and their officers, he directed them to quit Chandranagar immediately, and, making a *détour* to avoid the English, to march upon Kásimbázár, to join M. Law of Lauriston, of Trichinápalli notoriety, who commanded there. To these French soldiers he joined some twenty drilled sipáhís. Having thus reduced his garrison to clerks, women, of whom there were nearly fifty, and wounded, he hoisted (9 A.M.) a flag of truce. The fire of the

ships at once ceased. Conferences ensued, which, at 3 P.M., led to the conclusion of terms. These were very simple. Chandranagar was surrendered to Admiral Watson as the senior officer; the Chief of the settlement, his councillors and civil officers, and the non-combatants generally, were allowed to go where they pleased, taking with them their clothes and their linen; the European combatants, all wounded men, were to remain prisoners of war; the native combatants were granted entire freedom of action; the Jesuits were permitted to take away their church ornaments.

The capture of Chandranagar cost the English very dearly. Whilst the French losses, including those I have referred to, amounted in killed and wounded to about a hundred and fifty, that of the besiegers did not fall short of two hundred and six. But the English loss is not to be counted merely by numbers. The captain of the "Kent," Captain Speke, was very severely wounded; his son, a midshipman, and the first and third lieutenants, were killed. Ten other officers were likewise wounded. The capture was due to the ships, and these, naturally, suffered the most.

Was Chandranagar worth this expenditure of blood? Did its importance justify the ungenerous behaviour to a people who in the hour of the need of the English had pressed their neutrality upon the representatives of that nation, who had been played with till the distress had disappeared, and who had then been attacked and driven from their homes? These are questions which cannot fail to present themselves to a fair and impartial mind. How are they to be answered?

There is but one ground upon which the course adopted by Clive can be justified, and that is the ground upon which Admiral Watson rested his refusal to sign the treaty of neutrality. It was true, as he contended, that no treaty with Chandranagar would have been binding until it had been confirmed from Pondichery. At that moment Pondichery was expecting the most powerful fleet and army France had ever despatched to India, commanded by a man whose Irish birth and the forced exile of whose family had infused into his blood a bitter hatred of the English name. It was certain that if Pondichery were to confirm the treaty she would confirm it only to break it when she had secured predominance in Southern India. It was known, moreover, that the Núwáb was in correspondence with Bussy, then conducting French affairs at the Court of the Súbahdár of the Dakhan, and who had but recently acquired for France the territory known as the Northern Sirkárs, and rumour had it that that able officer was even then meditating a descent on the plains of Bengal. It is true that, looking at the conduct of the French towards the English in their distress, there is an appearance of want of generosity, almost even of perfidy, in the proceedings of Clive; but it must be remembered that war knows, or ought to know, no sentimental feeling; that the two nations were fighting in Europe, and that—utterly distrusting the Núwáb, feeling that it was always possible he might ally himself with the French, aware, moreover, that great danger was to be apprehended from the strengthening

of the French in Bengal by reinforcements from Southern India—Clive felt bound, in the interests of his country, to discard all secondary considerations, and to strike a blow which would absolutely crush the rising power of his most formidable European rival in Bengal. That is the justification of the course pursued by Clive, and it is, I believe, a very real justification. It seems very hard upon Renault and his fellow defenders of Chandranagar, but in war it is often necessary that the innocent should suffer.

The immediate result of the capture of Chandranagar was to increase the force of the French commander at Kásimbázár by fifty men animated by the most deadly hatred to England. On the Núwáb the news produced, as might have been expected, an outburst of ungovernable fury. In the first burst of anger he threatened the English with his severest vengeance. But again the Afghán scare came to smother his discontent and to change the current of his feelings. Almost at the same moment there reached him from Patná intelligence which, though wearing the appearance of positive truth, was absolutely false, that the army of Ahmad Sháh, in alliance with the Maráthás, was advancing to invade Bengal. This information so terrified him that he changed his curses against the English into blessings; he wrote letters to Clive and Watson congratulating them on their success, expressing his earnest desire to continue on terms of friendship with them, and offering them the territory of Chandranagar on the terms on which it had been held by the French. As a further proof

of his sincerity, he promised to comply without delay with the conditions upon which Watson had insisted in the letters which, some days earlier, had terrified him into giving a quasi-consent to the attack upon the French; that is, to restore, or to make compensation in money for, the property which had been destroyed at the capture of Calcutta in 1756.

But these smooth words covered very bitter feelings. Too late the Núwáb began to feel that he had been duped; and when, a day or two later, he discovered that the news regarding a combined movement from the north-west against Bahár and Bengal had no foundation in fact, he could not help showing by deeds how much he mistrusted the foreigners, to whom, nevertheless, he continued to write letters full of professions of amity. He then directed Rájá Dúlab Rám—who, the reader will recollect, commanded the army which had been sent to assist the French, but which, on the persuasions of Nandkumár, had halted some twenty miles to the north of Huglí, and who had subsequently marched northwards—to halt and encamp at Palási, a large village on the left bank of the river Bhágirathí, twenty-two miles south of Murshidábád. There was nothing in this order necessarily hostile to the English, for Palási was thirty-nine miles to the north of the position which Dúlab Rám had occupied when Chandranagar was being attacked, and the Núwáb possessed the undoubted right to locate his troops in any part of his own territory he might select, but, following as it did so soon upon the removal of the fears regard-

ing an invasion from the north-west, Clive viewed the selection of the halting-place with the gravest suspicion. In fact, not Clive alone, but all the English in Bengal utterly mistrusted the Núwáb. They could not forget the cruel manner in which he had allowed their countrymen to be treated only a year before; they knew that what he had yielded since he had yielded to fear; that he still hated them; and they believed that he would seize the very first opportunity that might offer to avenge himself for the many humiliations they had caused him. When, therefore, Clive heard that the army of the Rájá had halted and was to remain halted at Palási, he, not to be beaten in the game of brag, sent to the Núwáb a haughty demand that he should order the surrender to him of the other French settlements and subjects within his territories. At the time that he transmitted this demand, Clive, though sorely pressed by the Madras Government to return to that Presidency with the troops lent for the recovery of Calcutta, had fully made up his mind to remain in Bengal till the following September. His knowledge of the character of the Núwáb had satisfied him that compliance with the orders of the Madras Government would invite a second attack from a prince who had been irritated to a point which would render his vengeance insatiable, should he ever gain the opportunity. His purpose fully settled, and his resolution fixed still further to intimidate the Núwáb, Clive, whose army, by the arrival of the "Cumberland," had been increased to eleven hundred Europeans,

inclusive of artillery, and two thousand sipáhís, marched to Huglí and took up a position on the plain to the north of that town.

Never was the subjugation of a weak character by a stronger—the utter effacement of the moral force of a man's nature—displayed to a greater extent than on this occasion. Siráju'd daulah was at Murshidábád, virtual sovereign of the country, yet receiving imperious orders from the leader of a foreign race which he hated; commanded to abandon the few Frenchmen who yet remained in his province, and, whilst clinging to them, not daring to keep them; now loading the English envoy with reproaches, now imploring his support, never daring to act with decision, swayed one day by the rumours of an invasion from the north-west, another by some fresh demand on the part of the English; fearing to act, yet forced to do something. There can scarcely be imagined a position more pitiable. Little is it to be wondered that a man possessing a character so feeble, exposed to a position so critical, should have sought refuge, sometimes in uncontrollable bursts of anger, sometimes in debauchery; that he should have alienated his friends and encouraged the secret hopes of his enemies; that this conduct, joined to the growing mistrust he evinced of everyone around him, should have generated the conviction, amongst those who were brought most closely in connection with him, that the country which possessed such a ruler was doomed!

There were two men within his inner circle who at this period influenced greatly the action of the

Núwáb, and one of whom a little later proved the arbiter of his destiny. These were the English agent, Mr. Watts, and the commander-in-chief of his army, Mír J'afar Khán.

Mr. Watts had joined the Núwáb's camp after the retreat of that prince from Calcutta in the preceding February. He was a man possessing pleasant manners, great firmness of character, and a considerable acquaintance with the native character. Throughout the proceedings which led to the capture of Chandranagar he had kept Clive well acquainted with the changing moods of the Núwáb. Often threatened with incarceration, even with death, by the prince to whom he was accredited, he had opposed to the threats he received a composure which, combined with the fear of the English which ever haunted the Núwáb, always brought that prince to reason. Subsequently to the capture of Chandranagar Mr. Watts's task had become more difficult, for, as the fear of the Núwáb increased, his suspicion made strides still more rapid. It is impossible not to feel compassion for him. He really believed that the English were bent on his destruction. What is more, he felt within his heart of hearts the dread that they might succeed. Can we, without a touch of sympathy, picture to ourselves this unhappy prince on the morrow almost of the capture of Chandranagar, ordered, virtually ordered, to sacrifice the remainder of his French allies? We can almost see the English agent, Mr. Watts, offering him, in respectful language, the dagger or the bowl—the dagger of compliance or the bowl of vengeance. We

can see him rising to the height of his former dignity as in reply he told Mr. Watts that he, too, presented to him two alternatives—instant return to Calcutta, or an assurance under his hand that the English would cease to molest the French. We can comprehend the piteous condition to which this once absolute ruler was reduced when, on Mr. Watts's refusal to comply with either condition, the Núwáb ceased to insist further; more clearly still when we, who are behind the scenes, read, in the orders sent upon the report of these events to Mr. Watts, the decree for the deposition of the Indian ruler. Mr. Watts was instructed to send to Calcutta all the treasure and valuables pertaining to the English factory at Kásimbázár, as opportunity might offer, without exciting suspicion. Could there be a doubt but that this instruction was for the Núwáb "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin"?

Mír J'afar was a type of the people who, invading India some three centuries earlier from the north, had, without losing the national characteristics of the race, accommodated themselves to the habits of the people of the country. It is impossible to read the history of the Mughuls without being struck by the fact of the absence of personal loyalty displayed even by the highest in rank amongst their nobles. To be able and ambitious, to command the services of a large following, only rendered a nobleman the more anxious to place himself in the position where he could command the highest price. In the internecine wars of the Mughuls, in the war

especially between Humáyun and Kámrán, instances abounded where nobles of the highest rank deserted from one prince to the other, and then deserted back again, according as his fortunes seemed to be on the rise or on the fall. Desertion, in fact, was scarcely considered a moral delinquency. Timed almost always so as to benefit the prince who, but for it, would have been beaten, it was under those circumstances invariably condoned. Only in the rare instances when the chieftain to whom the deserter went over was beaten in spite of the defection, did the latter meet the reward he deserved. In a word, the proverb that "nothing succeeds like success" was a canon in the moral code of the Mughul, and it was the existence of this canon which caused desertion from a falling to a winning cause to be looked upon as, if a fault at all, a fault that was venial.

Mír J'afar was, I have said, a fair specimen of the race of noble warriors who had fought for and against Humáyun, for and against Akbar, for and against Aurangzíb in his fratricidal wars. He was a man of considerable capacity, of high character at the court, and of considerable influence in the province. By his marriage with the daughter of the late Núwáb, Alí Vardí Khán, he was connected with the reigning prince, the nephew of his predecessor. This connection had procured him the title of Bakhshí, or commander-in-chief of the army of Bengal. As a feudal prince he was enabled, too, to bring into the field a large body of his own dependents, men whom he had carefully trained.

Mír J'afar, who had stood very high in the estimation of Alí Vardí Khán, had witnessed with feelings of disgust the altered system which his successor, the reigning Núwáb, had introduced. The substitution of laxity for firmness, of a policy always in extremes for a steady course of action, had brought to his experienced mind the conviction that the first real shock would bring the State edifice to the ground. He was not alone in this conviction. A native state has this in common with European states, that the surest barometer of its stability is the feeling displayed towards it by the moneyed classes. In his admirable history of the fall of the English monarchy, Mr. Gardner has shown how the repeated refusal of the City of London to lend even a small sum to Charles I. precipitated the measures which brought about the great rebellion. Siráju'd daulah had feigned in Bengal but a few months. That short period, however, had sufficed to alienate the bankers of the province, men whose wealth, connections, knowledge, and commercial influence rendered them all-powerful within its limits. Nor was this all. The most powerful men in his province were equally discontented. Mánakchand, the general whom Clive had, by his boldness, forced to abandon Calcutta at the beginning of the year, had been compelled to purchase his freedom from the prison into which he had been, in consequence, thrown, by a fine of ten lakhs of rupees; whilst Rájá Dúlab Rám, whom we have seen despatched towards Chandranagar to assist the French, and subsequently retiring to Palási, had been disgusted to find himself

superseded in influence, and all his measures controlled, by a youthful favourite of no character or ability, whom the Núwáb had adopted in his absence.

When in a native court the most influential parties become discontented, the next scene in the drama is sure to inaugurate a plot. So it was on this occasion. The first move in the matter was made by a nobleman of good position, though not of the highest, yet who by his character commanded the confidence of the moneyed classes and of Rájá Dúlab Rám. The nature of the proposal made by this man, Yár Lútf Khán, showed the enormous moral power which the achievements of Clive and Watson had already, in a short space of three months, given to the English; how they had already come to be regarded as arbiters of the position. At a secret conference agreed to by Mr. Watts—whose presence at Murshidábád greatly facilitated the communications of the conspirators—and at which that gentleman was represented by Amíchand, Yár Lútf stated that the Núwáb intended the destruction of the English; that he was only temporising with them until the danger of invasion from the north should have passed away; that he was about to proceed with his army to Patná; that in his absence the English could easily seize Murshidábád; and that he, supported by Rájá Dúlab Rám and the moneyed classes, would join them in the attempt on the condition that he, Yár Lútf, were made Núwáb; that he would then subscribe to all the terms the English might impose.

Mr. Watts transmitted these proposals to Clive,

and in reply was requested to give the project every encouragement. But this answer had scarcely been received when a proposal came to him from a more influential quarter. Through the medium of an Armenian merchant named Petros, who had already been employed by the English in their negotiations with the Núwáb, Mír J'afar offered to aid the English against his master on the condition that he should succeed him. Clive received this proposition with joy. In concert with the select committee of the Council, he instructed Mr. Watts to conclude the negotiation on the general condition that on Mír J'afar becoming Núwáb there should be a full pecuniary compensation for all losses, public or private, sustained by the English, and an ample reward to the Company and all concerned for present risks and contemplated services.

Whilst this conspiracy was hatching the Núwáb still remained, anxious, hesitating, and undecided, at Murshidábád. We, who are behind the scenes, know how full of danger was his position, how well-grounded was his anxiety. He, poor man, not very clear-sighted, allowed himself to be influenced to a great extent by rumours, the truth or falsehood of one series of which he had not been able to ascertain when another series came from a different quarter still further to distract him. Thus, about the time of the fall of Chandranagar, and, after an interval of recovery, a little later, he was so alarmed by the rumours regarding a combined Afghán and Maráthá invasion that he was inclined even to court the English. Scarcely had

that alarm been dissipated than his fear and hatred of that people began to revive with more than pristine force. These varying moods, fomented by that party amongst his councillors which had planned his ruin, greatly affected his policy. That, too, was vacillating from day to day, changing from extreme to extreme, never well-defined.

In no instance was the evil effect of this shifting system better evidenced than in the treatment by the Núwáb of the French. We have seen that early on the day of the surrender of Chandranagar fifty tried French soldiers had marched out of the place and taken the road to Kásimbázár. Their arrival at that place raised the garrison of the French factory there to seventy European and some sixty native soldiers. The chief there was Law of Lauriston. With all his incompetence as a general, Law was a man of intellectual parts, and possessed to a large extent the power of influencing others. He had used this power on the Núwáb, who not only liked him, but who leaned upon him with all the force of a feeble nature, dreading some undefined evil from outside: he felt, at all events, certain of these few Frenchmen. But just then came that haughty missive from Clive, commanding, rather than demanding, permission to attack the remaining French settlements in Bengal. This message threw the Núwáb into a paroxysm of fury. Not only did he refuse to comply, but he threatened to put Mr. Watts to death unless the scheme were abandoned. But the letter of refusal had scarcely been despatched when something occurred which

entirely changed his mood. As unwisely timorous as he had been unwisely bold, he now besought Law to depart, to relieve Murshidábád of his presence, hoping by this sacrifice to pacify the English leader. It was in vain that Law pointed out that, far from saving him, this sacrifice would remove from his person the one body of men who, under all circumstances, would be true to him, whose presence in the vicinity of his capital still imposed some restraint on the traitors by whom he was surrounded, and would force even Clive to be circumspect; the Núwáb, much as he clung to Law, was as much dominated by the paroxysm of fear as he had been swayed a few short hours before by the paroxysm of rage. His treacherous councillors, seeing in the departure of Law the removal of one great impediment to their designs, fanned and encouraged the new feeling. The Núwáb, still, as I said, clinging to Law, besought him to depart. He gave him all the money, arms, ammunition, and supplies he might require, begged him not to go very far, certainly not further than Bhágalpúr, only a hundred and forty-four miles distant—but to go. At that place, he would be at hand, he said, to aid him in case of need. Law, finding all his arguments overruled, and at last positively ordered to depart, had no resource but to obey. With a heart heavy with the worst anticipations, he bade farewell to the Núwáb. When that prince, in the agony of the last adieu, told the French leader that he would soon see him again, Law, well aware of the net which was slowly but surely enveloping him, replied that it was nearly

impossible, that they would never meet again, and implored him to remember his words. He had, indeed, truly forecasted the future.

The departure of the French, far from mollifying Clive, encouraged him to proceed further. He prepared to send a party in pursuit of them. Meanwhile, he despatched a small detachment of troops, English and sepoys, to protect the English factory at Kásimbázár, and—assured now in his own mind of the necessity of coming to an open rupture with the Núwáb—he pressed urgently upon Mr. Watts the policy of cultivating relations with the discontented parties at the court, especially with Mír J'afar.

The space between the two hostile camps began from this moment to lessen. Every hour the tension became stronger. A few days after the departure of Law the mood of the Núwáb again changed. He had become convinced that the Afghán invasion was a myth. Information, this time sure and certain, reached him that the French general, Bussy, had expelled the English from their factories at Vishákpatanam and on the three arms of the Godávarí, and upon this information he based the hope, which also at an earlier period had fluttered before him, that that general would march to his aid. With the Núwáb hope and certainty were almost convertible terms. Because he hoped a result he felt certain that that result would be accomplished. Accordingly, as sanguine as he had been previously desponding, he despatched a messenger to Law to beg him to halt where he was ; he directed Mír J'afar to proceed with

fifteen thousand men to reinforce Rájá Dúlab Rám at Palási; he caused the English factory at Kásimbázár to be thoroughly examined; and to prevent the progress of the English ships of war, which he dreaded more than their soldiers, he sunk large piles across the river twenty miles below his capital; in fact, he made every preparation for war.

The English were no less bent upon it. The concealed hostility of the Núwáb chained Clive and his troops to Bengal. His departure for Madras would, he well knew, invite attack from the Núwáb. It was necessary, in the interests of peace itself, to precipitate hostilities. Clive, then, prepared to act. On learning of the advances made by Mír J'afar, he had stopped the preparations for the pursuit of Law, and had ordered the detachment intended for Kásimbázár to halt at Katwá. When, however, he and his colleagues received information of the aggressive action of the Núwáb, and that Mír J'afar had been ordered to Palási, he felt that the crisis was at hand. The mask so long worn was at length to be cast aside, and pretensions, alike hidden and asserted, were to be subjected to the arbitrament of the sword. But before this could happen it was necessary to make double sure of the traitors who had offered their services to the foreign invader. How this was accomplished I shall now proceed to relate.

# CHAPTER IX.

## The Conspiracy.

When Mr. Watts was informed that the Núwáb had ordered Mír J'afar to march on Palási, and that Mír J'afar, leaving behind him an agent to carry on the secret negotiation, had marched on that point, he despatched his colleague, Mr. Scafton, to Calcutta, to receive final instructions. At the same time, to lull the Núwáb into security, he ordered the detachment which had halted at Katwá to return to Calcutta.

The terms originally formulated by the select committee of the English Council* comprehended the substitution of Mír J'afar Khán for the Núwáb Siráju'd daulah as Súbahdár of Bengal; on the attainment of this result the payment by him of sums equivalent to a million two hundred thousand pounds sterling to the English Company; to six hundred thousand to the English inhabitants of Calcutta; to two hundred

* This committee consisted of Mr. Drake, Colonel Clive, Mr. Watts, Colonel Kilpatrick, Mr. Becher, and Mr. Manningham.

and forty thousand pounds to the natives, and to eighty-four thousand pounds to the Armenians. Further, they assured to the English all the lands within the Maráthá ditch; an extent of six hundred yards beyond the ditch, and a perpetual lease of the land south of Calcutta as far as Kálpí. Mír J'afar was to engage, likewise, not to erect any new fortifications near the river below Huglí, and to be at the charge of the maintenance of English troops whenever he should require their assistance. On the 6th May a document containing these terms was received by Mr. Watts, and was at once handed by that gentleman to Mír J'afar's agent. On the 12th, the agent proceeded to Palási to show it to his principal, and returned on the 14th with the assurance that Mír J'afar entirely consented to all the articles, but that he stipulated that they should not be communicated to Amíchand, as he distrusted the intriguing character of that Bengáli, and had no faith in his honesty.

It is probable that Mír J'afar, knowing the intimate relations existing between Amíchand and the English, and the enormous value of the services rendered by the former to that people, dreaded lest, in addition to the payments already stipulated, he should be called upon to provide very handsomely for the Bengáli agent. Most certainly this would have been the case. Yet it had been far better for him, far better for English honour, had he at once faced that necessary payment. By evading it in the manner in which I am about to show it was evaded, Mír J'afar had to pay an additional

sum about three times greater than the sum stipulated for by Amíchand; whilst on the consenting English the manner of evasion cast two slurs which no time can remove—the slur of ingratitude to a man who had served them truly, and who had in the previous February even saved them—the slur of dishonour which must ever rest on forgery with intent to deceive.

It was difficult for Mr. Watts to comply with Mír J'afar's wish regarding Amíchand. He had been trusted too much. He had, in fact, been Mr. Watts's confidant in his negotiations with the discontented nobles and merchants of the court and the city. He was thoroughly aware that a movement of some kind was projected by Mír J'afar. Judging from the confidence bestowed in him in the past, he had no doubt but that the nature of this movement would be communicated to him at the proper time. But when, on the return of Mír J'afar's agent, Amíchand discovered an unaccustomed reticence on the part of Mr. Watts, he became suspicious. Suspicion sharpened his powers of penetration, and he soon forced Mr. Watts to disclose to him the whole arrangement. Perceiving at once that his interests were to be sacrificed, he formulated demands which, though somewhat vague as to their money value, were deemed by the Englishman to be more than extravagant. Mr. Orme states that "it is said he threatened to reveal the conspiracy to the Núwáb if his demands were not complied with." Other writers have gone further. Sir John Malcolm writes: "Amíchand waited on Mr. Watts, when all

was prepared for action, and threatened instant discovery of the whole plot unless it were settled that he should receive thirty lakhs," &c. &c. Lord Macaulay, following Malcolm, states that Amíchand "demanded three hundred thousand pounds sterling as the price of his secrecy and of his assistance." Mr. Gleig's account of the transaction is more circumstantial still. He writes: "He (Amíchand) now waited upon Mr. Watts and told him that unless he were assured of receiving three hundred thousand pounds sterling, as the recompense of his agency, over and above the enormous sum already promised, he should inform Siráju'd daulah of all that was in progress, and cause the conspirators, English as well as native, to be arrested on the spot."

Now, all these positive assertions rest upon rumour, and upon rumour only. There is not a particle of proof to support them. Those of Malcolm, of Macaulay, and of Gleig have no other foundation than the historian Orme's "it is said." We are bound to bear in mind that every version of the story with which we are acquainted has proceeded from men whose interest it was to paint the conduct of Amíchand in the blackest colours; that Amíchand left no account of the transaction. Yet, even in the English version, no proof whatever is offered that Amíchand threatened to disclose the plot. Macaulay and Gleig have simply followed Malcolm. Malcolm, writing in the spirit of a partisan, of a man determined to see no fault in his hero, has simply improved upon Orme. He has dropped the all-important words, "it is said." But

even Malcolm is forced to admit that he has no written foundation for his categorical assertion, for he states: "The account of this transaction was probably communicated through Khwája Wazid, or some other confidential person, as we find no details of what passed with Amíchand in any of Mr. Watts's letters." This statement is in direct contradiction to the evidence given by Clive himself on the subject some years later. Clive then affirmed that he was made acquainted with Amíchand's threats of disclosure unless his demands were complied with, in a letter from Mr. Watts. That Clive received a letter from Mr. Watts is certain, for his reply to it, quoted by Mr. Gleig, is extant; and it is true that in that reply he calls Amíchand the greatest villain on earth. But what the historian would care to know is not merely whether there was a letter, but what were the contents of that letter. It is curious that Sir John Malcolm, with all his bias and all his investigation, should have found the other letters written by Mr. Watts at this conjuncture, but that this particular letter should have eluded his search; more curious still, that Clive himself should not have jealously guarded it.

The truth I believe to be that Amíchand made no threat whatever to Mr. Watts. Long association with men of the same class in India has convinced me that the very last measure they would have recourse to would be to utter anything approaching to a threat to the English gentlemen with whom they were brought in official contact. Threats are reserved for the inmost recesses of their dwellings, for their private

confidants: they are never spoken to their English chiefs. The difficulty an Englishman finds in dealing with the native officials of native courts, arises from the fact that they never show their feelings of injury. Though he may be conscious he has thwarted them, he cannot detect from their manner that they feel themselves aggrieved. Coupling my experience of the class with the guarded statement of Mr. Orme, "it is said," with the absence of this one letter from among the many written by Mr. Watts to the secret committee, with the admission of Sir John Malcolm that the account of the transaction was probably communicated by a native, who, I may add, would most certainly have embellished it, and having regard to the fact that the only positive evidence on the other side is the evidence given, many years later, before the Committee of the House of Commons by the one man whose interest it was to prove that his behaviour to Amíchand had been forced upon him by the threats made by that agent, I am forced to the conclusion that Amíchand did not threaten to betray the conspiracy, but that Mr. Watts, aghast at his demands, was firmly convinced that, unless they were complied with, Amíchand would betray him, and that in writing to this effect to Clive the fear which beset him coloured his expressions. I will go further, and affirm my conviction that considering the enormous advantages their connection with Amíchand had procured for the English, and the care, as I shall have to show, they took of their own individual interests, they were guilty of want of generosity, of ingratitude, and of

impolicy in not stipulating for him a special reward. That their conduct in this respect made his "heart turn round"—to use an expression familiar to his countrymen—I can well believe; that he would have revenged himself had his remonstrances not been attended to, I am certain; but that he should have spoken to Mr. Watts the threat to avenge himself—never! No Hindú of the class and caste of Amíchand would do it.

I do not think that any Englishman can read without a blush the story of the conduct of the secret committee when the treaty was sent back to Calcutta to be drawn up in form. To the clauses I have already mentioned they added others assuring a donation of two millions and a half of rupees for the squadron; of the same amount for the army, and presents of very nearly six millions of rupees* for themselves,

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* This sum was to be distributed thus:

| | |
|---|---|
| Mr. Drake, Governor | Rs. 280,000 |
| Colonel Clive, as 2nd in committee | 280,000 |
| Mr. Watts | 240,000 |
| Major Kilpatrick | 240,000 |
| Mr. Manningham | 240,000 |
| Mr. Becher | 240,000 |
| | Rs. 1,520,000 |

I may add that there was an understanding for a further distribution of private donations, and this, though apparently not placed upon official paper, was acted upon. According to this separate agreement—

| | |
|---|---|
| Colonel Clive was to receive | Rs. 1,600,000 |
| Mr. Watts | 800,000 |
| Major Kilpatrick | 300,000 |
| The six Members of Council, Rs. 100,000 each | 600,000 |

and this whilst they refused Amíchand the sum to which his demands were now reduced—less than one-third of this total.

But their cupidity and their baseness did not stop there. The letter despatched by Mr. Watts to Calcutta, carried, as it doubtless was carried, by a confidential agent full of the importance of his mission and prepared to exaggerate all its details, completely scared the secret committee. In acknowledging the receipt of it Clive informed Mr. Watts that "at a committee held both the Admiral and gentlemen agree that Amíchand is the greatest villain upon earth, and that now he appears in the strongest light, what he was always suspected to be, a villain in grain." Clive then announced the plan which the Council had resolved upon "to counterplot this scoundrel." He proposed that a fictitious agreement should be drawn up, the counterpart of the real agreement, with this solitary exception, that the fictitious agreement should contain a clause, not inserted in the real agreement, securing to Amíchand the sum of twenty lakhs of rupees, in the event

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|---|---|
| Mr. Walsh, Secretary to Colonel Clive . | Rs. 500,000 |
| Mr. Scrafton . . . . . | 200,000 |
| Mr. Lushington . . . . . | 50,000 |
| Major A. Grant, commanding detachment 39th Foot . . . . . | 100,000 |

All the military officers mentioned above received, in addition, their share of the donation to the army, of which Colonel Clive's portion amounted to Rs. 200,000.

Clive's plunder on this occasion amounted, it will be seen, to not less than Rs. 2,080,000. In those days a rupee was equal to two shillings and six pence.

of the success of the plot. It was arranged that both agreements should be signed by Mír J'afar, by the Admiral, as the senior officer, by Clive, and by the other members of the secret committee; that the false one should then be shown to Amíchand, the other retained. An unexpected obstacle to the successful carrying out of this nefarious scheme arose from the refusal of Admiral Watson to take part or share in it. From the first he had opposed the scheme: he absolutely refused to countenance it by attaching his signature to the false document. The real agreement, containing the added conditions in favour of the army, the navy, and the secret committee he signed readily enough; the other he spurned. This was, indeed, a dilemma. Amíchand had had too many transactions with the English not to know well that the concurrence of the senior officer in Bengal was necessary to the validity of any document. He had been a witness of the delay in the carrying out of the measures against Chandranagar, caused solely by the obstinacy of the Admiral. Were the treaty to be presented to him signed by all the other members of the committee but unsigned by Admiral Watson, his suspicions, already aroused, would amount to certainty. His present anger would become bitter hatred. Certainly the treaty must be withheld unless it could bear the signature of Admiral Watson. Granted that the danger was real, one course only lay before the committee; that was to add, in the genuine document, the name and the claim of Amíchand to the additional list, amounting to more than four millions

of rupees, in addition to the stipulations in favour of the army and navy. But they would not adopt this course. Ready enough to enrich themselves at the expense of the native nobleman whom they were tempting to treason, they refused to despoil him further for the advantage of a native agent who had shared their evil fortunes and had then rendered them priceless services. In reflecting upon their conduct the reader will do well to recollect that in the additional list, besides gratuities to the members of the committee, a sum of two million five hundred thousand rupees had been asked for the navy and an equal sum for the army; that of these sums Watson representing the navy, and Clive representing the army, would obtain a very large share. And yet, taking all this for themselves, they grudged the native his portion. Was it greed, was it the fear that the admission of the claim of Amíchand would lessen their own quota, or was it really a resolution to punish Amíchand for possessing the power to betray them, which influenced them to refuse to follow the one straight course leading out of the dark road they were pursuing?

Clive himself has stated that his sole object was "to disappoint the expectations of a rapacious man." But the additional list proves that there were many rapacious men. Clive made no attempt to disappoint their expectations. I have no doubt whatever but that Clive, Watts, and all the other members of the committee really believed that unless Amíchand were satisfied he would betray them. I come, then, reluc-

tantly to the conclusion that they would not agree to his terms, partly because independently of the possession of their secret he had no power; partly because they wished to punish him for having, as they believed, threatened to betray them; partly because the amount to which his pretensions were reduced, two millions of rupees, was excessive; but mainly because, having by their additional list squeezed Mír J'afar to an extent which would cripple him, they feared that the claim of Amíchand could only be defrayed at the expense of that list. Certain it is that, urged by Clive, they rejected the one straight course open to them.

They were thus reduced to the necessity of seeking a road out of the difficulty in that dark and slippery country which men of honour never traverse. In this search Clive was still their leader, their *ignis fatuus*. The fictitious agreement was the first product of his deviation from the path of truth and honour. When Admiral Watson refused to sign that agreement, Clive did not hesitate to make a greater divergence still, to plunge head foremost into the bottomless waters of crime. He forged Admiral Watson's signature!*

* It is due to the memory of Lord Clive to state that he always insisted that circumstances justified his conduct on this occasion; that Mr. Watts had informed him that Amíchand had made a large claim on Mír J'afar, and had threatened to betray him unless it were complied with; that on receiving this advice he thought act and policy warrantable in defeating the purposes of such a villain; that he himself formed the plan of the fictitious treaty; that he signed Admiral Watson's name; that he thought it warrantable under the circumstances, and would do it again; that he had no interested motives; and his only design was to

The fictitious document and the real treaty, the former transcribed on red, the latter on white paper, were then despatched by special messenger to Mr. Watts who had received instructions how to use them.

But very soon after the departure of the messenger there occurred an event which put to a decisive test the sincerity of the rival parties—the Núwáb and the English. It must be recollected that the latter had based their complaints against the Núwáb on the ground that he still maintained a large army encamped at Palási, and that *he could have no other object in maintaining such an army* but one hostile to themselves. The Núwáb had denied the justice of the conclusion, but had not recalled his army. He, on his side, mistrusted the English.

But, on the 3rd of May, there suddenly appeared in Calcutta a man, calling himself Govind Rái, and bearing a letter from Bálájí Ráo, the Maráthá Chief of Bírár. In this letter the writer proposed to co-operate with the English against the Núwáb, and offered, so soon as he should receive a summons from the English governor, to march into Bengal at the head of a hundred thousand men.

This letter, laid before the Council, was warmly

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disappoint the expectations of a rapacious man. Lord Clive also stated, many years later, that, to the best of his remembrance, Admiral Watson, though he refused to sign the treaty, gave the gentleman who carried it leave to sign it. But this belief is not borne out by evidence. Indeed, none of the contemporary records even mention it.

debated. The members, their hands yet red with the manufacture of a fictitious treaty, could not resist the conviction that this document belonged to the same category. They gradually came to the conclusion, indeed, that it was a device of the Núwáb's to lure them into an admission under their own hands of the hostile feeling which really animated them. Penetrated by this conviction, they resolved, again at the instigation of Clive, to meet craft with craft, and at once to baffle the designs and gain the confidence of the Núwáb by sending him the letter as a proof of their desire to take no advantage of his position, but to live at peace with him. Clive, therefore, despatched the letter to the Núwáb by the hands of Mr. Scrafton, accompanied by another from himself. In this he intimated that the communication of a secret offer from a foreign power was a last proof of his desire to live at peace with the Núwáb; asked that prince why he still kept his army in the field, thus destroying the English trade; why he, by his actions, led the English to suspect that it was his object to destroy them whenever an opportunity should offer. The letter reached the Núwáb when he was more than ever embittered against the English, for Amíchand had persuaded him that they had just entered into a secret treaty with Bussy to attack him, and he had given that wily Brahman an order for four hundred and fifty thousand rupees on the Rájá of Bardhwán as a reward for the information.

In point of fact the letter was genuine. The Núwáb had had no hand in the matter. He was

utterly ignorant of it. On an impulsive nature such as his was, the communication of such an offer as that forwarded to him by Clive acted just as the recovery of sight would act on a blind man. He saw now, or thought he saw, everything most clearly. It was a new light. He had been wrong, utterly wrong before. He had wronged the English, had suspected them unjustly, had injured them most gratuitously. But there was yet time to amend his conduct. Always in extremes, he resolved to be as friendly and confiding as he had been before hostile and suspicious. He at once proceeded to comply with the wishes expressed by Clive. He proposed at first to recall only Mír J'afar and his army from Palási, leaving there Rájá Dúlab Rám to co-operate with the English against the Maráthás; and he sent an order to Mír J'afar to that effect; but, on the persuasions of Messrs. Watts and Scrafton, who perceived that this arrangement would mar their scheme, the Núwáb, after some hesitation, consented to withdraw his whole army. In consequence, Mír J'afar returned to Murshidábád on the 30th May, Rájá Dúlab Rám four days later.

On the Núwáb, then, the transmission of the Maráthá letter had produced a marvellous effect. It had disarmed his resentment against the English. It had convinced him that he had nothing to fear from that people. It had produced that effect at a moment when in reality he had more to fear from them than on any previous occasion, when their plans were already formed, and their arrangements made, to dethrone him; when ambition and avarice

combined to deter them from making any terms with a man who stood in the way of the realisation of their sordid dreams.

The letter produced, likewise, on the Núwáb other results all favouring the English designs. I have already alluded to the fickleness and instability which marked the character of this unhappy prince. Relieved, by the communication of this letter, of all fear from the English, he thought he could indulge with impunity in the gratification of his private rancour. Unfortunately for himself he selected Mír J'afar to be the first recipient of his tyrannical humours. He had always hated that nobleman; but up to the time of the recall from Palási the hatred had been hidden by fear. But, believing, now, that the pacific feelings of the English rendered it unnecessary for him any longer to conceal that fear, he received him on his return from Palási in a manner so insulting as to induce in the mind of the general the belief that his life was in danger. Mír J'afar, accordingly, retired to his palace, situated at the southern extremity of the city, summoned all his own troops, sent notices to his friends to hold themselves ready to move at a moment's notice, and re-opened communications with Mr. Watts.

Such were the momentous results of one letter—a letter scarcely seriously intended. It had given encouragement to the English to proceed in their designs, had caused the suspicions of the Núwáb to disappear, had made his best general a bitter personal enemy!

Meanwhile, Mír J'afar had received from a trusty messenger, sent by Mr. Watts, the two treaties, the real and the fictitious. As eager for revenge as he was thirsting for power, he declined, however, to sign them until he should have consulted the Díwán Rájá Dúlab Rám, whom he had won over when they were encamped together at Palási. The Rájá, I have stated, reached Murshidábád on the 3rd June. On the following day he saw Mír J'afar, who showed him the treaty. But when he read the clauses stipulating for the enormous pecuniary rewards which Clive and his colleagues had demanded, even he, prepared as he was to pay heavily, was aghast. He knew well that to make such payments would more than exhaust the treasury and necessitate new and tyrannical imposts—a bad beginning for a new reign. He drew up, then, and submitted to Mr. Watts a counter-plan under the operation of which all the moneys that might be found available on the deposition of the Núwáb should be divided equally between Mír J'afar and the English. But Mr. Watts was not inclined to change a fixed for an uncertain amount; he absolutely refused to abate one iota of his demands. But, to win over this new formidable opponent, he offered the Rájá a bribe which few natives so circumstanced would have refused: he offered him the management of the Treasury with a commission of five per cent. on all sums that might be realised. The bait was eagerly swallowed; the Rájá withdrew his objections, and Mír J'afar, on the 4th June, signed the treaty. On the very same day, the Núwáb, all unconscious of his

intrigues, but wishing to indulge in his own personal rancour, removed that nobleman from the command of the army, and bestowed that trust upon a man devoted to his person, one Kwájah Háddi.

This change in the command greatly affected the power of Mír J'afar to render efficient service to the cause. At an interview held the day following with Mr. Watts—who, unable to hold open communication with one over whom the Núwáb exercised rigid surveillance, had caused himself to be conveyed, in a covered palanquin such as that used for women, into the zanána of the disgraced general—Mír J'afar admitted that he could now only actually dispose of three thousand men. He felt sure, however, he could exercise a very decisive influence upon other chiefs whom he knew to be discontented. The change, however Mr. Watts might regret it, could not affect the plans of the conspirators. They had gone too far to recede. Mír J'afar, then, in the most solemn manner, swore to observe the engagement he had entered into; he begged Mr. Watts to urge upon his government to act immediately and with decision; he explained the part he proposed to take in the decisive action which would follow the advance of the English; and he arranged to send the two treaties at once to Calcutta by the hands of a confidential officer. Mr. Watts then left him, returning in the same disguise.

But one task, then, remained for that gentleman to carry out, before, under some well-arranged pretext, he should himself depart for Calcutta. This task was the disposal of Amíchand. It would not do to leave

him at Murshidábád. The existence of the two treaties was known to more than one person, and in a city full of intriguers, many of them dependants of the rich merchant, the secret might at any moment be discovered. It was known that already his suspicions had been excited. He had come, if not to the conviction, at least to a very strong belief, that some web was being woven to which he had not the clue. It was necessary, therefore, that he, too, should proceed to Calcutta. Mr. Watts, then, pretending great care for his safety, suggested to him that, in the uncertainty of the contest which was about to ensue, his life would scarcely be safe at Murshidábád; that at any rate, at his age, the exertions which he would be called upon to make would be full of danger; that it was, therefore, advisable that he should proceed with Mr. Scrafton, about to set out at once, to Calcutta. These arguments had their effect. Amíchand delayed one day to endeavour to obtain certain sums from the treasury. When these were denied him, unable to obtain or unwilling to apply for the Núwáb's permission to depart —a most necessary passport—the wily Hindú behaved in such a manner as to call from the prince an order to leave his capital. Amíchand then started and reached Calcutta on the 8th June. Two days later the emissary sent by Mír J'afar arrived, with the two treaties, at that place. The committee had arranged means whereby the purport of the fictitious treaty should be at once made known, in an indirect manner, to Amíchand. The knowledge that his full claims were recognised in the fullest manner in a treaty

bearing the signature of all the contracting parties, silenced for the moment the doubts which had agitated his mind.

It was now time for the English either to act or to abandon their plans, for the air was full of rumours, and already an expedition against the Núwáb was the talk of the bazaars alike at Calcutta and Chandranagar. Clive saw very clearly that the opportune moment had arrived; that to miss it would be to slide once more into a morass of doubt and uncertainty. That he realised the vastness of the stake for which he was about to throw may be doubted. Even his vision, broad and keen as it was, was limited. But what he certainly did see was an assured position for the English; a preponderating influence in Bengal and Orísá, perhaps even in Bihár; wealth and honours for himself; a great name in history. It was impossible, then, that a man of his ambitious nature, with such a future dangling on the horizon, should allow the opportune moment to pass unheeded. He boldly seized it. Concentrating on the 12th June all his troops at Chándranagar, and despatching a ship of war to menace Huglí, the governor of which, Nandkumár, had threatened to oppose the passage of his boats, he dismissed the two agents of the Núwáb who were with him, and on the following day set out on the march which was to sever from the tottering empire of the Mughul its richest and its fairest province. The English troops proceeded in two hundred boats, towed by natives against the stream; the sipáhís marched along the right bank of the river on

the high road, made by the Mughuls, from Huglí to Patná. By the hands of the two agents or messengers of the Núwáb he despatched to that prince a letter in which he justified his action. In this he boldly accused the ruler of Bengal of having used every subterfuge to evade the accomplishment of the treaty of February; of having failed to restore, during the four months which had followed, more than one-fifth of the effects he had previously plundered; of having, subsequently to that treaty, invited Monsieur Bussy to assist him; of maintaining at that moment, within a hundred miles of his capital, a body of French troops under M. Law; of having in various ways, which were enumerated, insulted English honour. Clive added, that in the presence of this want of faith, of this concealed hostility, of these insults, the English had displayed exemplary patience, and had even taken the field to assist him when the action of the Afgháns in the north-west had alarmed him; but that they were tired of subterfuges, and now, seeing no other remedy, were marching on Murshidábád, where they intended to refer their complaints to the decision of the principal officers of his government, viz. Mír J'afar Khán, Rájá Dúlab Rám, the Séths, or principal bankers, and Mohan Lall. Clive then expressed a hope that the Núwáb would acquiesce in this arbitration and so spare the effusion of his blood, and concluding by telling him that "the rains being so near, and it requiring many days to receive an answer, he found it necessary to wait upon him immediately."

A more specious letter was probably never penned. Certainly a more insolent defiance from a settler in a foreign country to one who was, in everything but in name, the sovereign prince of that country, was never despatched. Its assertions will not bear the test of examination. From the day, the 4th February, when Clive had frightened him from Calcutta, the English had persistently bullied the Núwáb. They had taken Chandranagar in spite of him; had forced him to dismiss the French contingent under Law; had intrigued with and corrupted his officers; and had now the effrontery to propose to submit his conduct to the decision of the very men whom they had suborned! It was a serio-comic farce, the serious part of which was intended to work upon the nerves of a weak-minded man and to paralyse his action. It certainly produced that result.

Meanwhile, the fact that a vast conspiracy had been organised was known to a considerable number of persons was working its natural result at Murshidábád. Its chiefs, Mír J'afar, Rájá Dúlab Rám, the great family of the Séths, Yár Lútf Khán, Mohan Lall, and others, all had their confidants, more or less discreet; and these, too, whispered the plot to others. In this way it came about that the Núwáb, to whom there still remained many devoted friends, received hints that an intrigue was on foot in which Mír J'afar was a principal agent. Irritated as he was against Mír J'afar he now resolved to destroy him. Unfortunately for himself, he gave utterance to his threats before he acted. It thus

happened that Mír J'afar, well served by his spies, was forewarned, and was able to make preparations to resist a sudden attack. Still, between the 8th and 14th June, the situation was full of danger, and, uncertain of the result, he begged Mr. Watts to secure his own safety by a timely flight. Mr. Watts thought it prudent to comply. On the 13th he proceeded to the factory at Kásimbázár as if on an ordinary visit, was joined there by the three other English gentlemen belonging to the mission, who then, ordering supper to be ready for their return, rode out with him, accompanied by dogs and dog-keepers, as if for an evening exercise. After proceeding some miles they sent back the dogs and their keepers, and accompanied by one mounted servant, a Patán, rode for their lives. About midnight they reached Agardíp, a military station for the Núwáb's troops. Fortunately the sentries were asleep, and the fugitives were able to procure a couple of boats. Leaving their horses with the Patán they rowed down the river in these, were met at the junction of the Bhágirathí and Jalinghí rivers by a detachment of boats sent to meet them, and on the following day joined the army at Kalná, about a hundred miles north-west of Calcutta. Thence Watts despatched a messenger, with the news of his safety, to Mír J'afar. The Patán with the horses arrived the day following.

The intelligence of the flight of Mr. Watts and his companions reached the Núwáb just as he was about to attack the palace of Mír J'afar. It overwhelmed

him with terror, for it proved to him beyond a doubt that the English, of whose advance vague rumours had already reached Murshidábád, were in the confederacy against him.

It is interesting to mark how different natures are affected by sudden news foreboding immediate danger. The strong are braced up to meet the crisis with firmness and decision: the weak call to their councils that bastard prudence which paralyses action and is the surest ally of the threatening evil. Had the Núwáb belonged to the first category he had yet time not only to save himself but to baffle the English. Had he overwhelmed and crushed Mír J'afar, of whose treason he had sufficient proof, he might have met the foreign invader at the head of a united army bound to him by his recent success. But, belonging to the second, he deemed it more prudent to attempt to gain over the powerful relative who had defied and betrayed him. He, therefore, made overtures of reconciliation to Mír J'afar, which that nobleman naturally encouraged. An interview followed, which led to an agreement, in virtue of which, whilst Mír J'afar promised neither to join nor to give assistance to the English in the impending contest, the Núwáb engaged to allow him to retire unmolested from the province with his family and treasures as soon as peace should be restored.

Elated now, as he had been terror-stricken before the conclusion of a treaty which a man possessing the smallest intelligence would have recognised as hollow, the Núwáb, though he had not then received the

manifesto despatched to him by Clive, wrote to that officer in terms of defiance. He reproached him with the flight of Mr. Watts; informed him that it was suspicion of his tricky conduct which had induced him to keep his army so long at Palási; and concluded, in the manner still prevailing in Europe, by invoking the aid of the God of battles to defeat his plans. Whilst he despatched this cartel, he gave directions that his whole army, including the troops of Mír J'afar, should march at once to their former encampment at Palási, and sent pressing orders to M. Law, who was still at Bhágalpúr, to march with the utmost expedition to his assistance.

But, in spite of this new departure, the affairs of the Núwáb did not travel well. The march to Palási, upon the prompt execution of which so much depended, was delayed. The troops, who were to fight for him had not received their pay for a long time, and they refused to stir a step until all their arrears should be discharged. Owing to mismanagement, or worse, a tumult which might have been suppressed on the spot was allowed to extend over three days; and it was only on the 19th June that the soldiers of the Núwáb, appeased by a full compliance with their demands, set out for their destination.

Meanwhile, the English were advancing. On the 16th they had reached Paltí, a small town on the western bank of the Bhágirathí, six miles above the point where Mr. Watts and his fellow fugitives had been met by the boats. From this place, on the 17th, Clive despatched a force composed of two

hundred Europeans and five hundred native troops, with a gun and small howitzer, under Major Eyre Coote, to summon Katwá, a mud fort twelve miles further up the same river, likewise on its western bank, commanding its passage. The officer who commanded here for the Núwáb, infected with the generally prevailing malady of treachery, had promised to retire without fighting. Coote reached the town of Katwá, about three hundred yards south of the fort and separated from it by a small river, at midnight. He found it abandoned. But when at daybreak he summoned the fort the commandant only answered him by defiance. He made no real attempt, however, to defend the place. As soon as he saw that Coote's intentions were serious he set fire to a shed of mats which had been raised to protect the walls of the fort from the sun and rain, and, under cover of the smoke, made his escape northwards. Coote at once occupied the fort, within which and the granaries it protected he found as much rice as would sustain ten thousand men for a year. The main body of the army joined him there that evening, and encamped on the plain; but the next day the periodical rains set in with such violence that the men were forced to strike their tents and take shelter in the huts and houses of the town.

That very day Clive received from Mír J'afar a letter—the only one which had reached him since his march from Chandranagar, though he himself had written every day—giving an account of his reconciliation with the Núwáb, of the oath he had taken

not to assist the English against him, but concluding with a phrase to the effect that, nevertheless, the purport of his engagement must be carried into execution. In dealing with traitors a man of sense must feel that he himself is always liable to be betrayed. Certainly the tenor of this letter impressed Clive with the conviction that it was possible that Mír J'afar intended to make him play the part of a dupe. To foil him, and to be quite sure of his ground, he determined, then, not to cross into the island, the key to which he possessed at Katwá, until the political position should be more clearly defined. His doubts were not dissipated either by a report brought by a messenger on the 20th, or by another letter from Mír J'afar dated the 19th and received the day following. The former stated that Mír J'afar and his son Míran had accorded him an interview in the private part of the palace, but that the sudden entrance of the emissaries of the Núwáb had changed their tone of friendliness into a tone of menace, and he had been threatened with the fate of a spy. The letter, which followed the messenger, breathed a sound which Clive still considered uncertain; for, although in it Mír J'afar stated that he was about on that very day to march for Palási, that he would occupy a position on the right of the army whence he would send more explicit intelligence, and explained that fear of detection had alone caused his previous reserve, he neither gave a hint as to his own plans or to the plans of the Núwáb's army, nor suggested any mode by which the English army should co-operate with him.

Although these communications greatly dissipated the suspicions that had arisen in the mind of Clive as to the sincerity of Mír J'afar, they proved to him that the assistance to be rendered by that nobleman would be rather of a passive than an active character. This conviction caused him great embarrassment. Could he, dare he, with the small force under his orders, consisting, all told, of about three thousand men, of whom one-third only were Europeans, cross the Bhágirathí to confront an army of some fifty thousand, relying on the promise of one of their leaders that he would betray them? On the other hand, could he, dare he, after having announced to all Bengal his intention to attack and depose the leader of that host, risk the loss of prestige, the discredit, perhaps even the destruction, which a retreat on the very eve of the combat he had challenged would entail? Aware how appearances weighed with the people of the country, how much depended upon the show, at least, of the support of some leading natives, he wrote, that evening, a pressing letter to the Rájá of Bardhwán to come to his aid, if only with a thousand horsemen. The despatch of this letter did little, however, to relieve his mind. Every hour the pressure grew stronger, the tension less endurable. Unable, at last, to support himself the sole responsibility of a decision which involved the fate of the English in Bengal, the fate of Bengal, and more remotely, though not less certainly, the fate of India, he resolved to summon to a council of war all the officers present above the rank of subaltern. There came at once

to that council Major Eyre Coote of the 39th, so often mentioned in these pages; Major Kilpatrick, commanding the Company's troops; Major Archibald Grant, Captain Waggoner, and Captain John Corneille, 39th Foot; Captains Gaupp, Rumbold, and Robert Campbell, of the Madras service; Captains John Cudmore, Peter Carstairs, Alexander Grant, George Muir, Fischer, and Le Beaune, of the Bengal service; Captains Palmer, Andrew Armstrong, and Molitore, of the Bombay service; Captain Jennings, commanding the artillery, and Captain Parshaw, whose service I have been unable to ascertain. Including Clive, who had summoned it, the council numbered twenty members.

The question on which Clive asked the opinion of his assembled officers was the following: "Whether the army should at once cross into the island of Kásimbázár and at all risks attack the Núwáb; or whether, availing themselves of the large supplies of rice they had taken at Katwá, they should maintain themselves there during the rainy season, and, in the meanwhile, invite the co-operation of the Maráthás." Contrary to all custom, Clive gave his own opinion first. It was to remain at Katwá. He was supported by Majors Kilpatrick and Grant. Major Eyre Coote warmly espoused the opposite view. He argued that the soldiers were elated with the success they had already achieved, and were confident of victory; that to check them now, so near to the enemy, would be to damp their ardour, which it would be difficult to restore; that delay would give time to M. Law to join

the Núwáb; that, with the vigour which this arrival would infuse into the councils of that prince, it would be possible for him to cut off their communications with Calcutta, and cause them the greatest distress. He dwelt likewise on the fact that the European ranks had been strengthened by the enlistment of Frenchmen set free by the capture of Chandranagar, and that, under the circumstances to be anticipated, these would inevitably desert. To halt at Katwá, then, he declared to be a half-measure, unworthy of adoption. He was in favour of immediate attack; the only alternative was, in his opinion, an immediate retreat on Calcutta. Such a retreat would, however, he contended, involve disgrace to the English name, and injury to the Company's interests. In this view Major Eyre Coote was supported by Captains Alexander Grant, John Cudmore, Andrew Armstrong, George Muir, Robert Campbell, and Peter Carstairs. The other twelve sided with Clive. In this council of twenty, then, there was a majority of as nearly as possible two to one against immediate action, and in favour of remaining at Katwá.

But the decision of the council of war did not relieve the anxiety which had been pressing on the brain of Clive. Strolling, unattended, to a short distance from the camp, he passed in review, under the shade of a clump of trees, the arguments which had been used in support of the two views. A thorough soldier himself, a man who had proved in more than one field that boldness was prudence, he could not very long resist the conviction that the

reasons urged by the party of action were sound. Of the three suggested courses both the halt at Katwá and the retreat to Calcutta were fraught with danger of the worst kind, because a danger to be met with dispirited troops and a lost prestige. The attack, doubtless, was also dangerous. But it had this recommendation, that out of the nettle "danger" it was possible to pluck the flower "safety." For nearly an hour, in calmness and solitude, he passed in mental review the courses which had been suggested. Then he came to a decision, and returned towards camp. On his way thither he met Major Eyre Coote. Simply informing him that he had changed his mind, Clive entered his hut and dictated orders for the passage of the river the following morning.

# CHAPTER X.

## Plassey.

Deducting the sick and a small guard left at Katwá, the army detailed to march against the Núwáb consisted of nine hundred and fifty European infantry* and a hundred European artillerymen; fifty English sailors, a small detail of native lascars, and two thousand one hundred sipáhís. The artillery train was composed of eight six-pounders and two small howitzers. Obeying the orders issued the night before, this little force marched down the banks of the Bhágirathí at daybreak of the 22nd June, and began the crossing in the boats which had accompanied it from Chandranagar. It encountered no opposition, and by 4 o'clock the same afternoon it was securely planted on the left bank. Here Clive received another letter from Mír J'afar informing him that the Núwáb had halted at Mankárah, a village six miles from

* In these were included two hundred men of mixed blood.

Kásimbázár, and there intended to intrench himself. The Mír suggested that the English should march round the inland part of the island and surprise him.

Such an operation would have cut off Clive from his base—which was now the river Bhágirathí—and have entailed a march round the arc of a circle, whilst his enemy, traversing the chord, could sever him from all his communications. It was not very hopeful to receive such advice from a confederate, himself a soldier who had commanded in many a campaign. Clive met it in the direct and straightforward way calculated to force a decision. He sent back the messenger with the answer that he would march towards Palási without delay; that the next day he would march six miles further to Dáúdpúr; but that if, on reaching that village, Mír J'afar should not join him, he would make peace with the Núwáb.

The distance to Palási from the camp on the Bhágirathí, whence this message was despatched, was fifteen miles. To accomplish those fifteen miles the little army marched at sunset the same day, the 22nd, following the windings of the Bhágirathí, up the stream of which their boats, containing their supplies and military stores, were towed. After eight hours of extreme fatigue, the overflow of recent inundations causing the water to rise often up to their waists, whilst the rain descended in torrents upon their heads, the men reached, weary and worn out, at 1 o'clock in the morning of the 23rd, the village of Palási. Traversing this village they halted and bivouacked in a large

mango grove a short distance beyond it. There, to their surprise, the sound of martial music reached their ears, plainly signifying that the Núwáb was within striking distance of them. The mango-grove which formed the bivouac of the English force was in fact little more than a mile from the Núwáb's encampment. It was eight hundred yards in length and three hundred in breadth, and was surrounded by an earth-bank and a ditch. In its length it was diagonal to the river, for whilst the Bhágirathí flowed about fifty yards from its north-west angle, four times that distance intervened between it and the south-western corner. The trees in it were, as is usual in India, planted in regular rows.* Just beyond the grove stood a hunting-box belonging to the Núwáb, surrounded by a masonry wall. Of this grove, Clive, as soon as the sounds of martial music to which I have adverted reached his ears, detached a small force to take possession. It is now time that I should explain how it was that such music came to be in his close vicinity.

The reader will recollect that in consequence of the mutiny of his troops at Murshidábád the Núwáb had been forced to delay his march from that place till the 19th June. On the 19th they set out, but on that same day the Núwáb heard of the arrival of the English army at Katwá. Judging, from his know-

* The last of these trees, Mr. Eastwick informs us, fell some years ago, and has been eaten by white ants.—*Murray's Handbook, Bengal.*

ledge of the character of their leader, that they would cross the Bhágirathí and march on Palási without delay, he came to the conclusion that he had been forestalled at that place, and that it would be better for him to halt at Mankárah and watch thence the course of events. But when, on the 21st, he learned that Clive was still halting at Katwá, his resolution revived, and he marched at once to his old encampment at Palási, about one mile to the north of the grove of which I have spoken. He took his post here twelve hours before the English reached the grove.

His army was strong in numbers. It consisted of thirty-five thousand infantry of all sorts, men not trained in the European fashion, but of the stamp of those who may be seen in the present day in and about the chief towns of the territories of native princes of the second or third rank. They were, in fact, men imperfectly trained and imperfectly armed, and, in the rigid sense of the word, undisciplined. His cavalry, said to have amounted to about fifteen thousand, were better. They were mostly Patáns from the north, of the race of which the Indian irregular horse of the present day is formed, excellent light cavalry, well mounted, armed with swords or long spears. His artillery was better still. It consisted of fifty-three pieces, mostly of heavy calibres, 32, 24, and 18-pounders. But what constituted its greatest strength was the presence with that arm, to support the native gunners and to work and direct their own field-pieces, of forty to fifty Frenchmen—who had

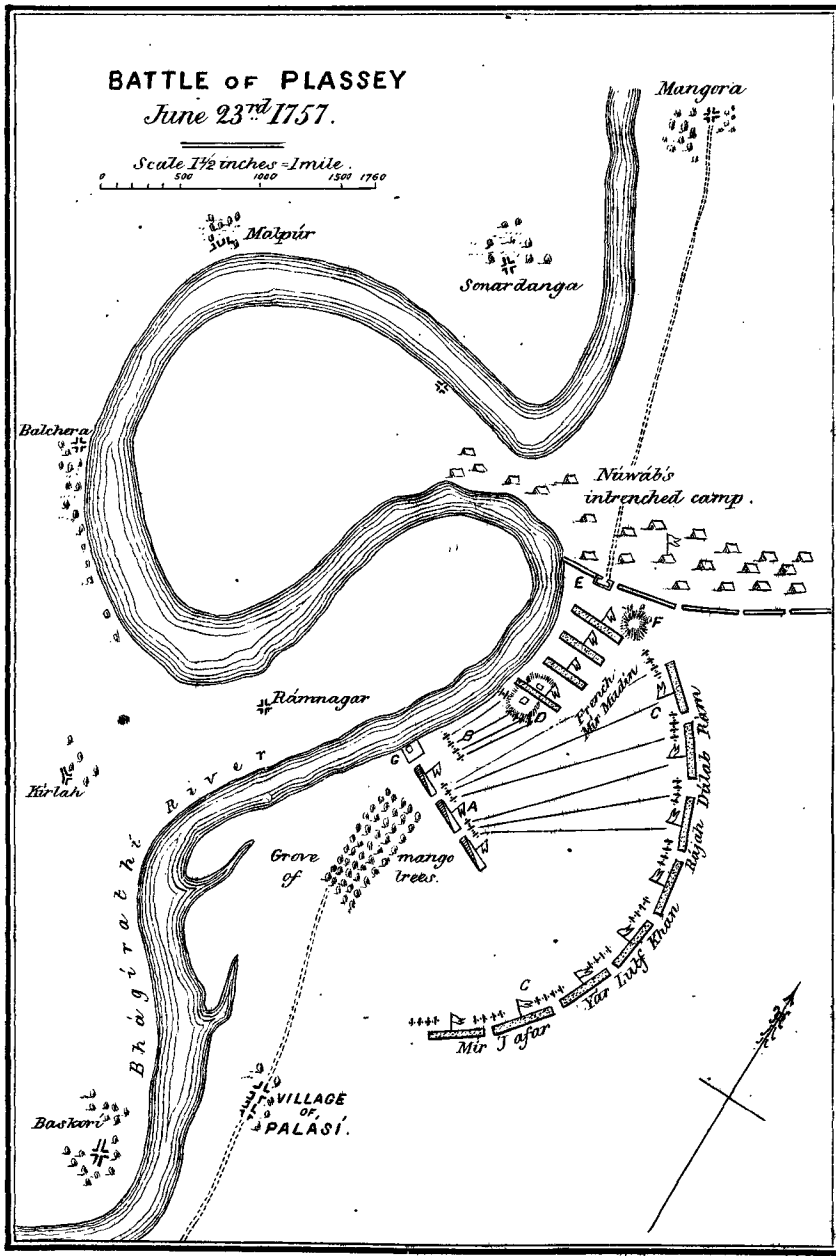
been called in from other parts of the province after Law and his troops had been dismissed—commanded by M. St. Frais, formerly one of the Council of Chandranagar. These men were animated by a very bitter feeling against the Englishman who had despoiled their flourishing settlement.

This army, thus strong in numbers, occupied likewise a strong position. The intrenched works which covered it rested on the river, extended inland in a line perpendicular to it for about two hundred yards, and then swept round to the north-east at an obtuse angle for about three miles. At this angle was a redoubt mounted with cannon. Three hundred yards east of this and in front of the line of intrenchments, was a hillock covered with jungle, and about eight hundred yards to the south, nearer the grove occupied by the English,[9] was a tank, and a hundred yards still nearer a larger tank. Both of them were surrounded by large mounds of earth at some distance from their margins. It is important to keep the mind fixed on these points when following the movements of the two armies.

At daybreak on the 23rd June the Núwáb's army marched out of its intrenchments and took up the following positions. The French, with four field-pieces, took post at the larger tank, nearest the English position—nearly half a mile from it. Between them and the river, and in a line with them, were placed two heavy guns under a native officer; behind these again and supporting them were the Núwáb's best troops, a body of five thousand horse and seven

thousand foot, commanded by his one faithful general, Mír Múdín Khán, by the side of whom served the prince's Hindú favourite, Mohan Lál. From the rear-most position of Mír Múdín the rest of the army formed a curve in the direction of the village of Palási, the right resting on the hillock covered with jungle, of which I have spoken, the left on a point covering the south-eastern angle of Clive's grove, at a distance from it of about eight hundred yards. The intervals were crammed with dense masses of horse and foot, artillery being interspersed between the masses or columns. The troops forming this curve, numbering about thirty-eight thousand, were commanded by the traitor confederates Rájá Dúlab Rám, Yár Lútf Khán, and Mír J'afar. The first was on the right, the second in the centre, Mír J'afar on the left nearest the English. The position was a strong one, for the English could not attack the point which barred their progress—that occupied by the French and Mír Múdín Khán—without exposing their right to a flank attack. In fact, they were almost surrounded, and unless treason had played her part they had been doomed.

From the roof of the hunting-box Clive watched the movements, as they gradually developed themselves, of the army of Siráju'd daulah. As Mír Múdín took up his position; as the corps of Mír J'afar, Yár Lútf, and Dúlab Rám poured out their myriads until the mango-grove his men occupied was not only flanked, but its furthermost end became almost overlapped by the extreme end of the arc formed by those myriads;




REFERENCE.

A. Position of the British army at 8 in the morning.
B. Guns advanced to check the fire of the French.
C. Núwáb's army in three divisions
D. The tank occupied upto 3pm by the French supported in their rear by Mú'dín Khán
E. F. The redoubt and mound taken at ½ past 4 P.
G. The Núwáb's hunting-box.

he could not conceal his astonishment at the numbers against whom he was about to hurl his tiny band. "What if they should all be true to their master!" was a thought which must more than once have traversed his brain as he witnessed that long defiling. It was too late to think of that, however, and Clive, true to his military instinct, which in the time of danger was always sound, resolved to meet this bold display by a corresponding demonstration. Accordingly he ordered his men to advance from the grove, and drew them up in line in front of it, their left resting on the hunting-box, which was immediately on the river. In the centre of the line he placed his Europeans, flanked on both sides by three 6-pounders; on their right and left he posted the native troops in two equal divisions. He detached at the same time a small party with two 6-pounders and two howitzers to occupy some brick-kilns about two hundred yards in front of the left (the native) division of his little army.

By 8 o'clock in the morning of this memorable day the preparations on both sides were completed. The French, under St. Frais, opened the battle by firing one of their guns which, well-directed, took effect on the British line. The discharge of this single gun was the signal for the opening of a heavy and continuous fire from the enemy's whole line, from the guns in front as well as from those in the curve. The English guns returned the fire with considerable effect. Still, however true might have been the aim of the English gunners, the disparity in numbers, in

the weight of metal, and in guns, was too great to allow the game to be continued long by the weaker party. Though ten of the enemy's men might fall to one of the English, the advantage would still be with the enemy. Clive was made to feel this when at the end of the first half-hour thirty of his men had been placed *hors de combat*. He accordingly determined to give his troops the shelter which the grove and its bank would afford. Leaving still an advanced party at the brick-kilns, and another at the hunting-box, he effected this withdrawal in perfect order, though under the shouts and fire of the enemy. These were so elated that they advanced their guns much nearer, and began to fire with greater vivacity. Clive, however, had now found the shelter he desired, and whilst the shot from the enemy's guns, cutting the air at too high a level, did great damage to the trees in the grove, he made the bulk of his men sit down under the bank whilst small parties should bore holes to serve as embrasures for his field-pieces. From this new position his guns soon opened fire, and maintained it with so much vigour and in so true a direction that several of the enemy's gunners were killed or wounded, and every now and again explosions of their ammunition were heard. Protected by the bank, the proportion of the casualties of the English now lessened considerably, whilst there was no abatement of those of the masses opposed to them. Still, at the end of three hours no great or decisive effect had been produced; the enemy's fire had shown no signs of diminishing, nor had their position varied. No

symptoms of co-operation on the part of Mír J'afar were visible, nor, in the face of such enormous masses, who had it in their power, if true to their prince, to surround and overwhelm any party which should attempt the key of the position, held by Mír Múdín Khán, did any mode of bettering the condition of affairs seem to offer. This was certainly the opinion of Clive when, at 11 o'clock, he summoned his principal officers to his side. Nor could he, after consultation with them, arrive at any better conclusion than this: that it was advisable to maintain the position in the grove till after nightfall, and at midnight try the effect of an attack on the enemy's camp.

The decision was, under the circumstances, sound, especially as it was subordinate to any incident which might, in the long interval of twelve hours, occur to alter it. Such an incident did occur very soon after the conference. There fell then, and continued for an hour, one of those heavy pelting showers so common during the rainy season. The English had their tarpaulins ready to cover their ammunition, which in consequence sustained but little injury from the rain. The enemy took no such precautions, and their powder suffered accordingly. The result was soon shown by a general slackening of their fire. Believing that the English were in a similar plight, Mír Múdín Khán advanced with a body of horsemen towards the grove to take advantage of it. The English, however, received him with a heavy grape-fire, which not only drove back his men but mortally wounded their leader.

This was the crisis of the day. As long as Mír Múdín lived the chances of Siráju'd daulah, surrounded though he was by traitors, were not quite desperate. The fidelity of that true and capable soldier might under any circumstances save him. But his death was a loss which could not be repaired. It is probable that some such conviction penetrated the heart of the unfortunate young prince when the news of the calamity reached him. He at once sent for Mír J'afar, and besought him in the most abject terms to be true to him and to defend him. He reminded him of the loyalty he had always displayed towards his grandfather, Alí Vardí Khán, of his relationship to himself; then, taking off his turban, and casting it on the ground before him, he exclaimed: "J'afar, that turban thou must defend." Those who are acquainted with the manners of Eastern nations will realise that no more pathetic, no more heartrending, appeal could be made by a prince to a subject!

Mír J'afar Khán responded to it with apparent sincerity. Placing, in the respectful manner which indicates devotion, his crossed hands on his breast, and bowing over them, he promised to exert himself to the utmost. When he made that gesture and when he uttered those words he was lying. Never was he more firmly resolved than at that moment to betray his master. Quitting the presence of the Núwáb he galloped back to his troops, and despatched a letter to Clive, informing him of what had happened, and urging him to push on immediately, in no case to defer the attack beyond the night. That the messenger

did not reach his destination till too late for Clive to profit by the letter detracts not one single whit from the baseness of the man who, fresh from such an interview, wrote and sent it!

But Mír J'afar was not the only traitor. The loss of his best officer, coinciding with the unfortunate damping of the ammunition, had completely unnerved Siráju'd daulah. Scarcely had Mír J'afar left him than he turned to the commander of his right wing, Rájá Dúlab Rám, for support and consolation. The counsel which this man—likewise one of the conspirators—gave him was of a most insidious character. Playing upon his fears, he continually urged him to issue orders to the army to retire behind the intrenchment; this order issued, he should quit the field and leave the result in confidence to his generals. In an evil hour the wretched youth, incapable at such a moment of thinking soundly or clearly, followed the insidious advice, issued the order, and, mounting a camel, rode, followed by two thousand horsemen, to Murshidábád.

The three traitorous generals were now masters of the position. Their object being to entice the English to come on, they began the retiring movement which the Núwáb had sanctioned. They had reckoned, however, without St. Frais and his Frenchmen. These gallant men remained true to their master in this hour of supreme peril, and declined to quit a position which, supported by the troops of Mír Múdín, they had maintained against the whole British force. But Mír Múdín had been killed, his troops were following the rest of the army, and St. Frais stood

there almost without support. To understand what followed I must ask the reader to accompany me to the grove.

I left Clive and his gallant soldiers repulsing the attack which cost the Núwáb his one faithful commander. The vital consequences of this repulse did not present themselves for a moment to the imagination of the English leader. He never for a moment thought that it would lead to the flight of the Núwáb and to the retirement of his army from a position which he had held successfully, and from which he still threatened the grove. There can be no doubt but that, at this period of the action, Clive had made up his mind to hold the grove at all hazards till nightfall, and then, relying upon the co-operation of Mír J'afar and his friends, to make his supreme effort. Satisfied that this was the only course to be followed, he entered the hunting-box and lay down to take some rest, giving orders that he should be roused if the enemy should make any change in their position. He had not been long absent when Major Kilpatrick noticed the retiring movement I have already described. He did not know, and probably did not care, to what cause to attribute it; he only saw that the French were being deserted, and that a splendid opportunity offered to carry the position at the tank, and cannonade thence the retiring enemy. Quick as the thought, he moved rapidly from the grove towards the tank with about two hundred and fifty Europeans and two field-pieces, sending an officer to Clive to explain his intentions and their reason.

It is said that the officer found Clive asleep. The message, however, completely roused him, and, angry that any officer should have dared to make an important movement without his orders, he ran to the detachment and severely reprimanded Kilpatrick. A glance at the situation, however, satisfied him that Kilpatrick had only done that which he himself would have ordered him to do had he been on the spot. He realised that the moment for decisive action had arrived. He sent back Kilpatrick, then, with orders to bring on the rest of the army, and continued the movement which that officer had initiated.

St. Frais, on his side, had recognised that the retreat of the Núwáb's army had compromised him, and that he was quite unable, with his handful, to resist the whole British force, which, a few minutes later, he saw issuing from the grove in his direction. Resolved, however, to dispute every inch of the ground, he fired a parting shot, then, limbering up, fell back in perfect order to the redoubt at the corner of the intrenchment. Here he planted his field-pieces ready to act again.

Meanwhile, two of the three divisions of the enemy's army were marching towards the intrenchment. It was observed, however, that the third division, that on the left, nearest to the grove, commanded by Mír J'afar, lingered behind the rest, and that when its rearmost file had reached a point in a line with the northern end of the grove, the whole division wheeled to the left and marched in that direction. Clive had no means of recognising that these were the troops of

his confederate, but, believing that they had a design upon his baggage, he detached a party of Europeans with a field-piece to check them. The fire of the field-piece had its effect in so far that it prevented a further advance in that direction. But the division continued to remain separated from the rest of the Núwáb's army.

Clive, meanwhile, had reached the tank from which St. Frais had retreated, and had begun thence a vigorous cannonade of the enemy's position behind the intrenchment. What followed can be well understood if it be borne in mind that whilst the leaders of the Núwáb's army had been gained over, the rank and file and the vast majority of the officers were faithful to their master. They had not been entrusted with the secret of the intended treason, and being soldiers, and superior in numbers to the attacking party, they were in no mood to permit that party to cannonade them with impunity. No sooner, then, did the shot from the British cannon begin to take effect in their ranks than they issued from their intrenchments, cavalry, infantry, and artillery, and opened a heavy fire upon the British force.

The real battle now began. Clive, seriously incommoded by this new move on the part of the enemy, quitted his position and advanced nearer to the intrenchment. Posting, then, half his infantry and half his artillery on the mound of the lesser tank, the greater part of the remaining moiety on a rising ground two hundred yards to the left of it, and detaching nine hundred and sixty men, picked natives and Euro-

peans, to lodge themselves behind the tank close to the intrenchment, he opened from the first and second positions a very heavy artillery-fire, whilst from the third the musketry-fire should be well sustained and well aimed. This masterly movement, well carried into execution, caused the enemy great loss, and threw the cattle attached to their guns into great confusion. In vain did St. Frais ply his guns from the redoubt, the matchlockmen pour in volley after volley from the hillock to the east of it and from the intrenchments. In vain did their swarthy troopers make charge after charge. Masses without a leader were fighting against a man whose clearness of vision was never so marked, whose judgment was never so infallible, whose execution was never so decisive, as when he was on the battle-field. What chance had they, brave as they were, in a battle which their leaders had sold? As they still fought, Clive noticed that the division of their troops which he had at first believed had designs upon his baggage still remained isolated from the rest and took no part in the battle. Suddenly it dawned upon him that those halted troops must form the division of Mír J'afar. Immensely relieved by this discovery, inasmuch as it freed him from all apprehension of an attack on his flank or rear, he resolved to make a supreme effort to carry the redoubt held by St. Frais and the hill to the east of it. With this object he formed two strong detachments and sent them simultaneously against the two points indicated, supporting them from the rear by the main body in the centre. The hill was

first gained and carried without firing a shot. The movement against the redoubt was not less successful; for St. Frais, abandoned, isolated, and threatened, had no resource but to retire. The possession of this position decided the day. Thenceforward all resistance ceased. By 5 o'clock the English were in the possession of the whole intrenchment and camp. The victory of Plassey* had been won! It had cost the victors seven European and sixteen native soldiers killed, thirteen European and thirty-six native, wounded.

The success, complete as it was, was rendered absolute by the arrival of the messengers, sent at an earlier period by Mír Já'far, but who had been not sufficiently nerved to risk their lives while the fighting was going on. Clive replied by requesting a meeting for the following morning at Dáúdpúr, to which place, after despatching a detachment under Major Eyre Coote to pursue the enemy, and securing a sufficient number of the Núwáb's fresh oxen to replace those of his own attached to the guns and ammunition wagons, he pushed on. There the separated divisions met at 8 o'clock in the evening, and there they bivouacked for the night. Their loss has been already stated. That of the enemy was computed in killed

* Such was the title given by the English to the victory, and which it has borne to the present day. Such a title must be respected. But the correct name of the village is that which, up to this page, I have given it in the text, "Palási," so called from the Palás tree (*Butea frondosa*), which used to abound in the vicinity.

alone at five hundred, and at as many in wounded; but as the figure was never certainly ascertained it may, if we dare judge from the accuracy of computations made under similar circumstances in our own days, be set down as very much smaller. There can be no question, however, as to the fact that three elephants and a number of horses were left dead on the field, and that fifty-three pieces of cannon, and the whole of the enemy's baggage, camp-equipage, stores, and cattle fell into the hands of the victors.

The following morning Clive deputed Mr. Scrafton and an Indian gentleman of standing, Omar Beg, to wait upon Mír J'afar and conduct him to the English camp. Mír J'afar should have had no cause for disquietude; he had withdrawn his troops from action at a critical period the previous day, and had sent messengers to Clive urging a course of action similar to that which the English general actually adopted. But "conscience makes cowards of us all," and the failure of his messengers to arrive before the victory had been virtually decided, joined to the conviction which probably even then had begun to steal over him that he had changed one master for another, and that other a very ambitious one, had given birth in his mind to feelings of great anxiety and doubt. These doubts were for a moment, though only for a moment, increased when, accompanied by his son Míran, he entered the camp. The sudden clash of the muskets caused by the presenting of arms made him start, "as if," writes Mr. Orme, "he thought it a preparation to his destruction." The immediate approach of Clive, and the salutation

with which, as he alighted from his elephant, the conqueror greeted him—the salutation of himself as Súbahdár of Bengal, Bihár, and Orísá—removed his fears. At the conference which followed Clive urged upon the new ruler the advisability of marching upon Murshidábád at once, as well to anticipate any further resistance on the part of Siráju'd daulah as to prevent any attempt to plunder the treasury. Mír J'afar promised to follow the advice, returned to his camp, and set out at once for Murshidábád. He arrived there the same evening.

Having despatched Mír J'afar to Murshidábád, and sent friendly letters to the other chiefs of the army, Clive resumed his march. On reaching Maidápúr (25th June) he despatched Messrs. Watts and Walsh, with an escort of a hundred native troops, to wait upon Mír J'afar. These gentlemen were also commissioned to arrange for the payment of the donations stipulated in the treaty, to be granted, in case of the success of the confederates, to the East India Company, to the inhabitants of Calcutta, to the army, the navy, and the members of the Select Committee. They found, however, that whereas these united claims amounted, including those of Clive himself, to nearly twenty-two millions of rupees, the treasury contained, all told, rather less than two-thirds of that sum. Under these circumstances it was impossible to satisfy all at once the greed of the conquerors. In this difficulty Rájá Dúlab Rám and the wealthy Séths came to the aid of Mír J'afar. With their assistance it was arranged that one half of the amount stipulated

should be paid at once—two thirds in coin and one third in plate, jewels, and goods—and that the remaining moiety should be liquidated by three equal instalments in three years. Such was the just consequence to Bengal of alliance with the foreigner—the emptying of the treasury and a public debt!

These arrangements having been completed, Clive entered the city and took up his quarters at the palace of Murádbágh. The usual court ceremonies followed. Míran, his hand not yet red with the slaughter of his kinsman, waited upon Clive, who in his turn paid a ceremonial visit to Mír J'afar, and congratulated the assembled nobles on the replacement of a weak tyrant by an able and valiant prince. The new Núwáb was then officially proclaimed, under high-sounding titles, not necessary to produce, to be Súbahdár of Bengal, Bihár, and Orísá.

In the midst of the general congratulations which followed this event, there was one painful incident which cannot be left unrecorded. The time had now arrived when it was necessary to disabuse the mind of the unfortunate Amíchand, the intermediary through whose exertions the conspiracy against Siráju'd daulah had first been set on foot. On the 30th June, the day on which the new Núwáb gave a formal and official ratification to the agreement already alluded to for the payment of the stipulated negotiations, the real treaty was for the first time shown to the deceived victim.*

* Mr. Orme states that the disclosure was made in a manner which, if he is correct, no right-minded man can regard as other

The result was a terrible shock to the system, which in about a month's time caused the development of softening of the brain. Eighteen months later this disease terminated his existence.

The treatment of this unfortunate man displays the worst side of the character of Clive—the utter want of scruple which, in the pursuit of the aim he had

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than brutal. "The conference being ended, Clive and Scrafton went towards Amíchand, who was waiting in full assurance to hear the glad tidings of his good fortune, when Clive said, 'It is now time to undeceive Amíchand,' on which Scrafton said to him, in the Hindústáni language, 'Amíchand, the red paper is a trick; you are to have nothing.' These words overpowered him like a blast of sulphur; he sank back fainting, and would have fallen to the ground had not one of his attendants caught him in his arms. They carried him to his palankin, in which they conveyed him to his house, where he remained many hours in stupid melancholy, and began to show symptoms of insanity. Some days after, he visited Colonel Clive, who advised him to make a pilgrimage to some pagoda, which he did soon after, to a famous one near Maulda. He went, and returned insane, his mind every day more and more approaching to idiotism; and, contrary to the usual manners of old age in Indostan, still more to the former excellence of his understanding, he delighted in being continually dressed in the richest garments, and ornamented with the most costly jewels. In this state of imbecility he died about a year and a half after the shock of his disappointment."

The effects of the announcement made by Mr. Scrafton were not so immediate as is here described, for there exist records showing that Amíchand was still employed in subordinate duties one month after that date. It was about that period after the announcement—the beginning of August 1757—that his malady manifested itself, and Clive, hoping and believing that he would recover, recommended him to make the pilgrimage. In other respects there is no reason to doubt the substantial accuracy of Mr. Orme's narrative.

marked out, would allow him to forge the signature of a colleague, to be false to his plighted word. It is not by such acts, but rather by pursuing a policy directly opposed to such acts, that the countrymen of Clive gained in later years the confidence of the countrymen of Amíchand. Much as has been written in palliation of the transaction, the broad fact remains that it was a crime which no expediency could justify and no casuistry could explain. The fact that Clive himself did in his later years declare the deception "warrantable in such a case, and that he would do it again a hundred times" indicates either the obstinate man who having committed a fault will never allow that he could have been wrong, or the moral obliquity which, in the pursuit of an aim regarded to be essential, considers all means tending to attain it to be lawful.

The fate of the wretched boy whom Mír J'afar had supplanted demands now its record. Fleeing from Plassey on the evening of the 23rd, Siráju'd daulah reached his palace at Murshidábád at a late hour the same night. Before break of day he was joined there by many of his principal officers, likewise fugitives from the field. Some of these advised submission to the English; others urged him to make a stand in the city. The second plan was adopted, and Siráju'd daulah ordered the massing of the troops and the donation to each man of three months' pay. But when his officers had left him, all his old fears, his irresolution, his distrust, revived. Betrayed once, he could not feel sure he was not being betrayed again.

These fears were shared by all the inmates of his zenana, and their wailings greatly impressed him. He again, then, changed his plans, and before noon despatched elephants laden with women, jewels, and specie, towards Patná, he intending to follow as soon as the consequences of his defeat at Plassey should be more clearly manifested. The arrival of Mír J'afar that evening expedited his movements. He now resolved to escape at once, and join, if possible, the French under Law, who, he had reason to believe, was marching down from Bhágalpúr. Confiding his intentions to one man only, a eunuch upon whose fidelity he could rely, he disguised himself, left the palace that night unnoticed, accompanied only by his favourite wife, Lutf-ul-Nissa, and the eunuch, and taking a casket of his most valuable jewels, entered a boat which had been prepared, manned by stalwart rowers, at the wharf of the palace. Urged on day and night with great vigour the boat reached Rájmahal, nearly ninety miles distant, on the night of the fourth day following. Here the fatigue of the oarsmen necessitated a rest for the night. For this purpose the whole party took shelter in the buildings of a deserted garden close to the river. Here, however, in the early morn they were seen, and Siráju'd daulah was recognised, by a fakír named Dáná Sháh, whose ears, it is said, he had caused to be cut off thirteen months before, at the time that he took the fatal resolution of marching against Calcutta. The fakír at once acquainted Mír J'afar's brother, Mír Dáúd, who resided in the town, with his discovery,

and the latter sent at once a party of his retainers to secure the prize. The task was effected without any difficulty, and the Núwáb was at once despatched by boat to Murshidábád. Treated on his journey with every kind of insolence and indignity compatible with the preservation of his life, the unhappy Siráju'd daulah was carried, on the 2nd July, into the presence of the kinsman whose treason had caused his ruin. It was a touching scene. Mír J'afar owed his fortune, his honours, his position as a great noble of Bengal to the favour of Alí Vardí Khán, the grandfather of the wretched boy who was now brought, like a common felon, before him. It had been to the loyalty of Mír J'afar that Alí Vardí Khán had, on his death-bed, confided the fortunes of his favourite grandson. And now that grandson, brought into his presence, was prostrating himself before Mír J'afar, imploring life and only life. He would renounce all but that—to a boy not yet twenty of all boons the most precious. It is said that Mír J'afar seemed touched. He would, however, promise nothing. His son, Míran, a youth of a brutal nature, loudly insisted that no mercy should be shown to one, who, if he were spared, would not fail to be a thorn in their path. J'afar, apparently undecided, ordered the prisoner to be removed whilst he should consult with his officers regarding his fate.

If Mír J'afar Khán had been touched by the urgent appeals of his late master, the removal of that prince from his presence effectually hardened him. It was in vain that the better class of the high officials

whom he consulted, advised mercy, mild and secure imprisonment, but no bloodshed. The implacable Míran was there to raise the spectre of disputed tenure. At length, apparently wearied of the discussion, Mír J'afar yielded to the request preferred by his son that Siráju'd daulah should be confided to his care for the night. He knew well the certain consequences of his compliance, and he expressed neither anger nor compunction when he learned in the morning that the grandson of his benefactor had been murdered by the agents of his own son. The mangled remains of the unfortunate prince were placed on an elephant and exposed to the populace and soldiery, after which they were interred in the tomb of his grandfather, Alí Vardí Khán. Peace be to his ashes! He had undoubtedly committed great faults. Though he had not ordered the imprisonment in the Black Hole, he had, by condoning the conduct of those who perpetuated that outrage, become an accessory after the act. In other respects he had not sinned against the English. In the long intrigues and negotiations which followed his retreat from Calcutta on the 4th February, to the day of his death, he was the only one of the principal actors who had made no attempt to deceive. It was his misfortune to have been entrusted, when yet in his teens, with a power almost absolute, to have possessed a headstrong yet fickle disposition, to have had no education, to have been surrounded by traitors, and to have been confronted with a man who possessed a genius as daring as his moral nature was utterly

devoid of scruple. It will, I think, be conceded, that, great as were his faults, his punishment was greater still, and that having regard to the low morality of the country of which he was a native; to the terror inspired in his mind by the conduct of Clive before Calcutta and at Chandranagar; to the fact that he, the ruler of Bengal, was bound to resent the conduct of the foreigners from a land beyond the seas, who, from the status of settlers, were assuming a position not very far removed from that of dictators; he has been too cruelly judged by the descendants of the people who have so largely profited from his faults and from his misfortunes.

# CHAPTER XI.

## The Distribution of the Spoil.

The painful incident which closed the last chapter had not yet been forgotten when the new Núwáb was made to feel that the pressure of the little finger of his English allies was less tolerable than the whole weight of the loins of Siráju'd daulah. It was hard indeed to begin a reign with an empty treasury, and with the incurring of obligations which would make him, to great extent, the slave of his own courtiers. However, there was no help for it. His finance-minister and erst fellow-conspirator, Rájá Dúlab Rám, who, for his share in the plot, now claimed and received five per cent. on all the sums in the public treasury, paid over to the English on the 6th July seven million two hundred and seventy-one thousand six hundred and sixty-six rupees; on the 9th August a further sum of one million six hundred and fifty-five thousand three hundred and fifty-eight rupees; and on the 30th of the same month a further amount of one million five hundred and ninety-nine thousand seven hundred and thirty-seven rupees, in gold orna-

ments and jewels. Of the first moiety of the promised stipulations there remained unpaid, two months after the change of dynasty, only five hundred and eighty-four thousand nine hundred and five rupees.

But if the disbursing of these enormous sums embarrassed the Murshidábád authorities, the distribution of those sums in Calcutta caused still greater perplexity. The payment of the amount awarded to the inhabitants of Calcutta for the losses sustained by them during the capture of the place the previous year was easily arranged,* but when the prominent individuals of the ruling class came to be dealt with difficulties rose at every turn. Admiral Watson, who had had no share in the proceedings which had produced such magnificent results, preferred a claim for a special allowance in addition to his share, by no means inconsiderable, of the amount reserved for the navy. The claim was resisted, and although Clive lent all the weight of his authority to support it, urging his colleagues to agree to a deduction of ten per cent. from their own specified proportions, it was finally rejected.† Then, again, it was urged that the sailors belonging to the squadron who had served in the field should participate in the prize-money sanctioned for the army. The officers of the army did not see the justice of this, and the discussion

* The great influx of money and trade led to the establishment the following year of the Calcutta Mint (19th August 1758).

† Admiral Watson died very soon after. His heirs unsuccessfully endeavoured to enforce his claims in a Court of Law in England.

between the two services led to a very serious ill-feeling.

To settle this and other disputed points Clive appointed a committee composed of two officers from each branch of the military service. This committee, decided against the claims of the sailors, and directed that the distribution of the awarded money should take place without the intervention of prize-agents. Clive over-ruled this decision and dissolved the committee. The committee wrote a protest against this action, and laid it before Clive. Clive at once placed the whole of its members under arrest, and sent their ringleader, Captain Armstrong—the army being still in the field—to Calcutta. The incident terminated by submission and apology on the part of the officers; it caused, however, an ill-feeling which required some time to allay. Indeed, it seriously affected the feeling of the officers towards Clive himself, and when, on his return to Calcutta, he brought Captain Armstrong to a court-martial, that officer was acquitted. The distribution of the money, when it did take place, produced a most injurious effect on the health of the men by the opportunities it gave for indulgence in every kind of debauchery. The mortality in consequence increased greatly.

Meanwhile the pressure placed upon all classes at Murshidábád to provide the funds which caused so many heart-burnings was beginning to display itself in a manner which was not calculated to increase the popularity of the new Núwáb. The enormous sums exacted by his European allies did not include the

entire demands made upon him on his accession. He had friends, dependants, confederates, some of whom had been won over to him, whilst still a conspirator, by promises of rewards in money in the event of success. He had now to provide for his dependants and to make good these promises. The situation was extremely critical. But for the sums paid to the English he could have satisfied the native claimants. With the English he could not break: he had been forced, with a smiling face and an aching heart, to satisfy them. But he had not been many weeks ruler of Bengal before he recognised the fact that he had aided in establishing a power behind the throne greater than the throne itself, and that, if he wished to maintain his position, he would be obliged to take an early opportunity to reckon with that power. Less imprudent than his predecessor, he kept for the moment these thoughts to himself, and turned his attention to the replenishing of his coffers by putting pressure upon the wealthier of his subjects. No sooner had Clive left Murshidábád than he attempted to apply the screw. He did this, however, in a manner so tactless that he only succeeded in alienating the most powerful of his supporters. Rájá Dúlab Rám, who had been his confederate, withdrew to his own palace, summoned his friends, and refused all intercourse with the Núwáb. Rám Rám Singh, Rájá of Parníah, Rámnarain, governor of Bihár, went into rebellion. The disaffection reached even the distant city of Dháka, where one of the sons of Sarfaráz Khán, the Núwáb

defeated and slain by Alí Vardí Khán, thought the moment opportune to strike for power.

These disaffections and these outbreaks threw the Núwáb once more entirely into the hands of Clive. In vain did he strive to avoid the appeal. Power in the East depends upon money, and Clive had rendered Mír J'afar powerless by extracting all the coin he possessed. In the demand for aid Clive saw an opportunity of placing the settlement he represented on a footing which would make it for ever independent of the caprices of núwábs and emperors. Again did his cool, calm, clear judgment enable him to meet the crisis. He had not many troops to spare, but those which were at his disposal he promptly used. On 6th July he had detached Major Eyre Coote at the head of a party consisting of two hundred and twenty-three Europeans, five hundred native troops, and two 6-pounder guns, in pursuit of M. Law, who, summoned from Bhágalpúr by Siráju'd daulah, had arrived within twenty miles of Rájmahal when he heard of the catastrophe of Plassey. Had he only pushed on, he would have saved Siráju'd daulah and possibly changed the face of the campaign. True, however, to his nature, he had halted for further intelligence. On learning the fate of Siráju'd daulah he had marched to Patná, the capital of the province of Bihár, the governor of which, Rámnarain, had never wavered in his fidelity to his master. Coote reached Bhágalpúr on the 18th, learned there that Law had passed through Patná and had taken the road to Audh, and immediately pushed after him. Coote reached Patná

on the 26th, and received there evidence of the hostile disposition of Rámnarain, and information that Law and his party were only one day's march beyond the limits of the Bihár province. His own extreme desire was to follow them up, but his Europeans, who had mutinied once, were still ill-disposed to proceed further, and the native portion of his force, mostly men from Southern India, already far from their homes, now displayed a similar disinclination. Forced, then, to renounce the immediate pursuit, Coote marched to Dánápúr. He subsequently proceeded as far as Chaprá, but, on receiving orders from Clive, returned thence to Patná, and reached that place on the 13th August. Though Coote himself was compelled to leave from ill-health, the little force remained at Patná till its services were required in the manner to be related.

It was whilst this force was there located, and subsequently to Clive's return to Calcutta on the 17th September, that the disturbances and disagreements between Mír J'afar and his governors and great officers came to a height. Appealed to by the Núwáb to aid him in repressing these, Clive embarked the whole of his available force, now reduced to four hundred European and thirteen hundred native troops, in boats at Chandranagar, on the 17th November, and reached Murshidábád on the 25th. He brought with him the Rájá of Parníah, and made his peace with Mír J'afar. On the 30th, joined by the detachment stationed at Kásimbázár, consisting of two hundred and fifty Europeans, he proceeded towards Rájmahal,

to which place Mír J'afar's army had preceded him, and arrived there on the 3rd December. The main object of the Núwáb at the moment was to pacify the province of Bihár. Compared to this the disaffection in the other portions of his government was of small importance. Indeed, the knowledge that the English had taken the field was of itself sufficient to allay it. But Bihár, powerful in wealth, in position, in the character of its population, was not to be trifled with. The authority of the Núwáb shaken there, his position at Murshidábád would become wholly insecure. Mír J'afar was, then, naturally urgent that no delay should occur in ensuring the pacification of this important dependency.

Again was he in the toils of Clive. The English leader was well aware of the urgency of his ally. He used it for his own purpose and the purpose of his countrymen. Encamped close to the Núwáb at Rájmahal, he refused to accompany him in his tour of pacification until all the arrears due to the Company should be paid up, and all the articles of the late treaty executed. This condition placed the Núwáb in a dilemma. He could not pacify Bihár without the assistance of the English, and he could not obtain that assistance unless he were to enter into a specific performance, impossible for him to carry out without the assistance of his powerful vassal, Rájá Dúlab Rám. Now he had insulted and made an enemy of that vassal. The question, then, narrowed itself to this: was it better to dispense with the services of the English or to seek a reconciliation with Rájá Dúlab Rám?

A wiser man would have avoided the necessity of the first alternative by maintaining the bonds of friendship with his vassals. But it was too late to think of that now. The English were there. Their dismissal without acceding to their terms could only mean destruction. The Núwáb, then, utterly helpless, made overtures to Dúlab Rám. The safety of this nobleman having been guaranteed by Clive, he came to Rájmahal on the 23rd, and, on the 30th, effected his reconciliation with the Núwáb.

There remained still the performance of the contract with the English. This was carried out in the following manner. Clive received orders on the treasury of Murshidábád for twelve and a half lakhs of rupees, and assignments on the revenues of Bardhwán, Krishnagar, and Huglí for ten and a half. This accounted for the amount due under the treaty. For the payment of the nineteen lakhs which would fall due in the following April, assignments on the same three districts were given; whilst, to complete the fulfilment of the other conditions, the Núwáb issued orders for the cession to the Company of the lands south of Calcutta noted in the treaty, on the payment of an annual rental of two hundred and twenty-two thousand nine hundred and fifty-eight rupees—at which sum they had been assessed.

The preliminaries having been executed, the combined armies set out—2nd January 1758*—on the tour

* The first anniversary of the recapture of Calcutta. What a history is comprised in those twelve months!

of pacification. Patná was the first city which was to receive the costly honour of the visit. The timely submission of Rámnarain, and more especially the representations of Clive on his behalf, ensured his re-appointment to the office of governor—under the nominal supremacy of Míran, the Núwáb's son—of Bihár. In acknowledgment of this exercise of patronage in his favour, Rámnarain paid seven lakhs of rupees into the Núwáb's treasury. Nor were English interests neglected on this auspicious occasion. Bihár was the home of the manufacture of saltpetre —a commodity which formed a large article of the trade of the foreign settlers. Its manufacture was a monopoly generally farmed to some agents who made his own terms for its sale. Clive, seeing the advantages which would accrue to his countrymen, proposed to the Núwáb that the Company should become the farmer, offering terms higher than any at which the monopoly had been previously rated. The Núwáb was very unwilling, however advantageous the terms, that so important a trade should fall into the hands of those in whose counsels he already heard the voice of a master. But—for that very reason, perhaps—he felt himself forced to accede. He simply stipulated that an annual supply of twenty thousand maunds* should be reserved for himself.

The Núwáb had resolved to remain at Patná till the patents confirming him in his new office, for which he had applied to Dihlí, should arrive. Clive, well

* A Bengal maund was equal to 76 lbs.

aware that his presence alone, by its influence on Mír J'afar, ensured the order which had been re-established, had resolved, whatever might be the personal inconvenience, not to quit Patná until the Núwáb should take his departure. The patents did not reach the camp till the 14th April. With those for the Núwáb came one also for Clive, nominating him a noble of the Mughul empire and a Mansab or Commander of six thousand horse, one of the highest honorary titles that could be given. The investiture took place with great ceremony the following day. The combined forces then proceeded to Bárrh, where they broke up, the Núwáb sending his army back to Murshidábád, remaining himself for a shooting excursion on the hills, Clive returning to Calcutta. As he passed through Murshidábád, it became the duty of Clive to send to the Núwáb a serious complaint regarding the conduct of his son, Míran, who, disappointed because the presence of Clive at Patná had frustrated the plan he had formed for the elevation of his brother-in-law, Mír Kásim, to the governorship of Bihár, had spread reports which caused the inhabitants of the city to regard the advent of the English leader with the greatest alarm. This alarm was soon dissipated, and Clive, having remained at Murshidábád long enough to receive assurances from Mír J'afar that Míran's conduct had no countenance from him, and the most contrite apologies from Míran himself, returned to Calcutta.

His journey had not been fruitless. Whilst healing the sores which are the inevitable consequence of

violent revolution, he had received incontestable evidence that the result of the battle of Plassey had been to make the Núwáb of Bengal, Bihár, and Orísá virtually dependent on the foreign settlers who had won for him his throne. He had seen as clearly that time and circumstances would make this state of dependency more and more absolute.

# CHAPTER XII.

## The Deglutition of Bengal.

On the 24th May, Clive returned to Calcutta. He had left at Kásimbázár all the European infantry who had taken part in the bloodless but important campaign just concluded, and a newly-raised battalion of sipáhís. He had left them there close to the capital of Mír J'afar, as much to be ready for any emergency as to remind the Núwáb of the presence and the power of those who had raised him to his semi-regal position. His first act on reaching Calcutta had for its object a purpose not dissimilar in character. He desired to place the capital of the British territories in a state of absolute security against attack. He had traced, before starting to accompany Mír J'afar, at Gobindpúr, the lines of a new Fort William—the Fort William which now exists—capable of defying any number of assailants. Finding that but little progress had been made in the work during his absence, he so stimulated the energy of those engaged in it that, four months

after his arrival, the *enceinte*, the ravelins, and the covered way, were completed, and the other parts were in a very forward state.

Before this, however, had been accomplished, Clive had to encounter a trial sufficient to disturb the equanimity of a man who was conscious of having rendered great services to his country. On the 20th June there arrived in Calcutta despatches from the India Office, penned after Clive had recaptured Calcutta but before he had achieved any of the successes which followed the recapture, imposing a new constitution for the government of the Company's possessions in Bengal. This constitution was ridiculously absurd. It provided that the Council should consist of ten members, and that the four senior of these should preside for three months at a time. The ten members were all nominated, and the list did not include the name of Clive. This omission was truly accounted for at the time by the belief that the home authorities were under the impression that Clive had simply carried out the programme allotted to him, and after the recapture of Calcutta had returned to Madras. But the features of the constitution were not the less ridiculous. Government by a rotation of five years has been often found to have many inconveniences, but government by a rotation of three months would, in India, even at the present day, be unworkable.

From the dilemma which was thus imposed upon the authorities in Calcutta the Bengal settlement was saved by the good sense of the ten gentlemen upon

whom power had been so unceremoniously thrust. They were perfectly conscious that any attempt they might make to perform the play of "Hamlet" without Hamlet would terminate in their unceremonious dismissal from the stage. They, therefore, unanimously requested Clive to accept the office of President of the Council, and perform its duties till the pleasure of the Court of Directors should be known. Clive, after some consideration, gracefully acceded to their request.

It was no time, indeed, for holding back. The long-threatened storm of French invasion had burst upon Southern India. A powerful French force, commanded by a brilliant general, Count Lally, escorted by an equally powerful French fleet, had arrived at Pondichery. Two encounters had taken place, both undecided, between the French and English ships. Lally, summoning Bussy from Haidarábád, had marched to Tanjúr, the conquest of which place would be, it was believed, a prelude to a march upon Madras. Under these circumstances an urgent request was transmitted to Clive, who had, it will be recollected, been only lent to Bengal, to return and save the territories which were the cradle of his renown.

Urgent as was the request, tempting to an ambitious man as was the offer, Clive was unable to accede to the one or to accept the other. His place, he felt, was still in Bengal. The services he had rendered to Mír J'afar had been so burdensome that revolt against the English yoke had been the secret thought

of his son, his kinsmen, his confederates, his courtiers —his own one cherished hope. Nor was the situation without danger. Rumours of the two encounters between the rival fleets, of the magnitude of the military armaments of the French, of their march against Tanjúr, of the terror and disquietude of the English, had reached Murshidábád in an exaggerated form. The party which disliked the English alliance seized the opportunity to urge Mír J'afar to break at once with those whom they regarded as his masters. By an intrigue, the minister devoted to English interests, Rájá Dúlab Rám, was dismissed. It is possible that, in spite of a visit paid to Calcutta by the Núwáb at the period of the disgrace of his minister, the Court party would have proceeded further, but that immediately after Mír J'afar's return the security of his quasi-throne was threatened by an invasion from the north.

The Mughul empire had not recovered, it never did recover, from the blows dealt it by the invasions of Nádir Sháh and Ahmad Sháh. Thenceforward chaos reigned supreme. Order, discipline, authority, disappeared, and the right was the right of the strongest. Such was the state of things when Sháh A'lam, heir to the throne, tired of the bondage in which he was held by the all-powerful minister of his father, the Emperor Alamghir Sáni, broke loose from restraint, entered Rohilkhand, raised there an army, and with the active support of the Núwáb of Alláhábád, of the Rájá of Banáras, and of the powerful zamíndárs of Northern Bihár, and the encouragement of the

Núwáb-Vazír of Awadh (Oudh), invaded Bihár and marched directly on Patná.

The intrigues, conspiracies, and underhand dealings against the English, which constituted at the time the statecraft of the Court of Murshidábád, gave way, on receipt of this news, to abject and degrading fear. The Núwáb and his friends mistrusted everyone, from Rámnarain, Governor of Patná, whom they hated and feared, down to the sentry at the palace gates. The treasury was empty; the provinces had been exhausted to meet the English demands; the Séths, more disgusted with the rule of Mír J'afar than they had been with that of the man against whom they had conspired to instal him, were engaged in making a pilgrimage to Jagannáth; the Núwáb had scarcely a resource left. In the frenzy of his despair he sent an urgent request to his old enemies, the Maráthás, to march to his aid; then, as the invader might come before the ally, scarcely less to be dreaded, should arrive, he debated with his confidants as to the mode in which it would be possible to raise sufficient money to buy off the invasion. When the empty treasury, the desolate condition of the provinces, the absence of the Séths, forced him to dismiss this idea, he turned then to the course, alike the most natural and the most hateful to him; he implored urgently, beseechingly, even abjectly, the assistance of the English.

Clive was not unprepared to employ the troops of the presidency to support the Núwáb of his own creation. Immediately after he had taken upon him-

self the duties of President of the Council he had set himself to work to reorganise the local army. The Bengal European Battalion, subsequently the 1st Fusiliers and till the abolition, within the last few months, of the regimental numbers, the 101st Regiment of the Line, had been raised to full strength by the volunteering into its ranks of almost all the men of the detachment of the 39th Foot, ordered home, and by the incorporation into it of the European detachments brought from Madras and Bombay. He had formed the artillery into two companies, and had increased the native army by the raising of a fourth battalion. Major Kilpatrick, the able coadjutor who had fought with him in Southern India and in Bengal, having died, Clive had selected as his successor Major Forde of the 39th Foot, then at Madras, an officer of very remarkable ability. Forde had in consequence come round to Calcutta, and, holding the rank of lieutenant-colonel, commanded all the Company's troops in Bengal. Clive had scarcely completed these arrangements when he received a message from the Rájá of Vijiyanagaram to the effect that by the withdrawal from Haidarábád of the French force under Bussy, the Northern Sirkárs had been left without sufficient protection, that he and his confederates had risen in revolt, and that the assistance of an English force would enable them to expel the few French troops who were there. Clutching at an opportunity which, if well employed, would consummate the work he had begun six years before, Clive, denuding himself, despatched Forde (12th October) at the head of

five hundred Europeans and two thousand native troops with some guns to Vishákpatanam (Vizagapatam) to conquer the Northern Sirkárs for the English, and to eradicate French influence at Haidarábád. The despatch of this expedition reduced the European force in Bengal to little more than three hundred men, including artillery, nor did the arrival of recruits during the four months that followed increase that number very considerably. The returns, dated the 6th February 1759, show that inclusive of non-commissioned officers and drummers the whole European infantry in Bengal consisted at that date of three hundred and ninety-five men—of whom a hundred and forty were recruits—and the artillery of ninety-three. During that month, however, the total was largely increased by arrivals from England, and, in view of coming contingencies, Clive at this period raised a fifth battalion of sipáhís.

Such was the military condition of the English zamíndárí when Clive received from Mír J'afar the urgent, beseeching, even abject requests for aid, of which I have spoken. Once again was he the master of the situation, the arbiter of the destinies of Bengal! For it was not only Mír J'afar who solicited his aid. Almost simultaneously there reached him letters from Sháh A'lam reminding him that he was a noble of the Mughul empire, a commander of six thousand horse, and summoning him to render lawful service to himself in his expedition. The letter was accompanied by many promises of personal advantages.

Clive was well aware that his title as a noble of the

empire bound him to act not with but against a rebel to its lord. He was well acquainted, too, with the ill-assorted nature of the confederation of which the Sháhzádah was the head. Moreover, Mír J'afar was his creation, and he never, throughout his service in India, lost sight of that fact. It did not require, then, the letters which he, nearly at the same time, received from the Emperor, soliciting his assistance against his "misguided and rebellious son" to decide him to march with all his available force to the assistance of Mír J'afar.

With this object in view, he set out from Calcutta on the 25th February (1759) at the head of his whole available effective force, consisting of four hundred and fifty Europeans and two thousand five hundred sipáhís. So important did he consider the crisis that he was content to leave Calcutta to be guarded by a few sick and newly-arrived recruits, a small detail of gunners, and a portion of the newly-raised fifth battalion of sipáhís. He reached Murshidábád on the 8th March, set out again with the Núwáb's army, commanded by his son Míran on the 13th, and marched into Patná on the 8th April. Before he arrived there, however, the rumour of the action he was taking had done its work. The army of the Sháhzádah had fallen back, baffled and disorganised.

It happened in this wise. The march of the rebel army towards Patná and its near approach to that city had produced in the mind of the governor, Rámnarain the greatest apprehensions. Rámnarain was bound to Mír J'afar neither by the ties of affection

nor by those of a similar faith. For the times in which he lived he was regarded as a man of a singularly loyal political character, and he had clung to Siráju'd daulah as long as that prince exercised the office of Núwáb of the three provinces. On the fall of Siráju'd daulah he had recognised his successor, but he was soon made aware that his previous loyalty had rankled in the mind of Mír J'afar, that but for Clive's personal exertions he would long since have been removed, and that even then he held the office of governor of Bihár by a very precarious tenure. He was now called upon to oppose, in the interests of a master who hated him, the army of a prince who in a few years would, in all probability, be master of the Mughul empire. Placed in this position he acted with remarkable discretion. Massing his forces, he took up a position outside the city, whence he could communicate easily alike with the Núwáb and the Sháhzádah. Then, writing to the former and to Clive that, not strong enough to give battle to the enemy, he held his position pending the arrival of reinforcements, he sent a message to the Sháhzádah to assure him of his good will. He had resolved, in fact, to follow the advice given him by Mr. Amyatt, the head of the English factory at Patná, and "act as he found most to his own advantage."

As the Sháhzádah approached nearer, Mr. Amyatt and the English embarked on board boats which had been prepared, and proceeded down the river. As soon as they were well out of sight, Rámnarain acted upon a resolution which had long been forming in his

mind—to pay a visit to the camp of the Sháhzádah and judge for himself of his prospects of success. He proceeded thither, was received with the greatest consideration, clothed with a dress of honour, and confirmed in the government of Bihár. But whilst these ceremonies were progressing Rámnarain had used well his own eyes and the eyes of his confidants. He had noticed the want of cohesion, the hollow fidelity and the interested motives of the hungry adventurers who followed the Sháhzádah, and he had made up his mind. Prolonging his stay as long as possible to retard the progress of the rebel army, he returned, when the march was again resumed, to Patná, nominally to prepare that city for the Sháhzádah's reception, really to arrange for its defence. He performed this latter task so effectually that when, on the 23rd March, the rebel army appeared before Patná its leaders found they had to undertake a siege. In the interval between that date and the 4th April Rámnarain repulsed several attacks, each one of which, however, rendered his position less and less secure. Help, however, was at hand; and the arrival of a detachment of English-trained sipáhís, commanded by an English officer, on the last-named date, so disheartened the besiegers that they raised the siege and retired.

The crisis was now over. The ill-assorted federations of which the Sháhzádah's army had been composed broke up and dispersed, and the Sháhzádah himself, joined by the French detachment under Law, took refuge in the territories of the Rájá of Bundelkhand.

Before his retreat he had written a humble letter to Clive imploring pecuniary aid to enable him to effect it, and had received for that purpose a donation of eight thousand rupees.

Such was the position when, on the 8th April, the united army of Clive and Míran reached Patná. Having repaired the defences of the city, Clive and his ally marched to the banks of the Karamnásá river to clear the country of the detached parties who still lingered there plundering. This task was soon accomplished. Clive then returned to Patná to receive there the expressions of boundless gratitude poured upon him by Mír J'afar, and the more substantial present, as a personal jaghír, of the zamíndárí of the whole of the districts south of Calcutta, then rented by the East India Company, and bringing in an income calculated at thirty thousand pounds a year. This was the famous jaghír the denial of his right to which in later years roused so much bitterness. Leaving a European garrison in Patná, Clive returned, accompanied by Mír. J'afar and his son Míran, to Calcutta, and arrived there in June. He had been cheered, some time before his return, by intelligence of the complete victory obtained by Colonel Forde over the Marquis de Conflans at Kondúr, and of the subsequent storming of, and surrender of the French army at Machhlípatanam (Masulipatam), and he was awaiting with a calm certainty the information that not only the Northern Sirkárs, but paramount influence at the Court of Haidarábád, had been permanently transferred from the French to the East India Company.

But before this consummation was attained a difficulty with another power presented itself. The Dutch at Chinsurah had for some time past noticed with jealousy and alarm the growing importance of the English settlers. The special advantages with respect to trade, and the monopoly of saltpetre, had affected their revenues, whilst the right claimed and exercised by them to search all vessels coming up the Huglí, and the insistance on the employment only of English pilots, had touched their pride to the quick. All these evils had come upon them since the fall of Siráju'd daulah. They were the natural consequences of the elevation to the chief place in Bengal of a Núwáb entirely dependent upon the English. Chafing under these evils, the Dutch had watched with the keenest interest the gradual alienation of Mír J'afar from his English patrons. Before the invasion of the Sháhzádah had terrified the Núwáb into a renewal of his amicable relations with Clive, the negotiations between Chinsurah and Murshidábád had reached a very critical phase. It might almost be said that a secret alliance had been formed for the expulsion of the English. This much is certain, that, utterly unknown to the latter, the Núwáb had given his countenance, support, and approval to the Dutch scheme of introducing into Bengal a body of troops far exceeding in number those at the disposal of Clive.

The repulse of the invasion of the Sháhzádah, the consequent re-knitting of ties with the English, the gratitude at the result of Mír J'afar, came to cool

the passionate desire by which the latter had been animated, before those occurrences, to shake off the English yoke. But the Dutch preparations had proceeded too far to be suddenly stopped. Letters containing the terms of the alliance with Mír J'afar, accompanied by earnest requests for the means to execute the conditions agreed upon, had been despatched to, and received at, Batavia, and an armament was already on its way to the Huglí.

Rumour, how originated it is difficult certainly to affirm, but arising probably from the indiscretion of the Núwáb and his confidants, had spoken early in 1759 of the proximate arrival of a large Dutch force, and an incident occurred in the month of August, just six weeks after the return of Clive from the campaign against the Sháhzádah, which seemed to indicate that it was not altogether baseless. During that month a Dutch vessel, having on board a large number of Malayan soldiers, arrived at the mouth of the Huglí. Clive at once informed the Núwáb of the event, and took precautions to prevent alike the passage of the ship up the river and the march inland of the Malays. In vain did the Dutch authorities at Chinsurah declare that the ship was really for Nágapatanam (Negapatam), and had been driven to the Huglí by stress of weather; that as soon as she should receive water and provisions she would resume her voyage. A clandestine attempt made by the Dutch Master Attendant to convey eighteen of the Malayan soldiers in his official barque to Chinsurah—an attempt discovered and frustrated

—threw great doubt on this pacific declaration. Finally, however, the ship resumed her voyage. Unsupported, she had been powerless, in the face of the suspicions her presence had awakened, to effect anything against the English.

But in the October following, when Mír J'afar was actually in Calcutta, the guest of Clive, the more serious attempt, the result of his negotiations with Chinsurah, was actually made. In that month there arrived at the mouth of the Huglí seven Dutch ships full of troops, Europeans and Malays. The Núwáb affected to treat the matter lightly, and announced his intention of immediately proceeding to his own town of Huglí, to summon thither to his presence the Dutch authorities, and insist upon their at once dismissing their ships, or, in case of their refusal, of chastising them and driving them out of Bengal. Mír J'afar did proceed to Huglí; he did summon to his presence the Dutch authorities. What actually passed in secret conference cannot be known; but the historian has the authority of Clive himself for asserting that the Núwáb "received them in a most gracious manner, more like friends and allies than enemies to him and to his country." A few days later Mír J'afar wrote to Clive to inform him that he had granted the Dutch some indulgences with respect to their trade, and that they had engaged to leave the river with their ships and troops as soon as the season should permit.

The occasion was one of those which brought into the strongest light all the higher qualities of Clive.

In the presence of danger his intellect was always clear, his judgment unerring, his action prompt and resolute. Not for a moment was he taken in by the specious letter of the Núwáb. Reading between its lines, he saw, not only that the Dutch had no intention of sending away their ships, but that they had obtained the Núwáb's assent to bring them up to Chinsurah. He at once resolved, to use his own emphatic words, that they "should not" bring them up. The events of the few days immediately following came to justify his prescience. Certain information reached him that the Dutch ships had weighed anchor and were moving upwards, that Dutch agents were active at Chinsurah, at Kásimbázár, and at Patná, in raising troops, and that at these acts the Núwáb was conniving.

The position was such as would have driven an ordinary man to despair. On board the Dutch vessels in the river were seven hundred European and eight hundred Malay troops, well armed and equipped; at Chinsurah was a Dutch force of a hundred and fifty men, and native levies daily increasing in number; behind the Dutch was the Núwáb, as ready now to act as he had been at Plassey, the moment fortune should seem to declare in their favour. To meet this enemy Clive had, at Calcutta, three hundred and thirty Europeans and twelve hundred sipáhís. It is true that he had other detachments scattered over the province; but the nearest of them was too distant to be available at the crisis now impending. In this hour of

danger Clive was cool, calm, self-reliant, even confident. He took at once every possible precaution. He sent special messengers to summon all available men from the outposts: he called out, to defend the port and the town, the militia, amounting to three hundred men, five-sixths of whom were Europeans: he formed half a troop of horse of some twenty to thirty volunteers, and enlisted as infantry nearly a similar number of men who could not ride. Of the four English vessels then in the Hugli, he despatched one, the smallest, with an express to Admiral Cornish, then cruising on the Arakan coast, asking for immediate aid; the three others he ordered up to aid in the defence of the town. The batteries which commanded the most important passages of the river near the town, Tannah fort, and Charnock's battery,* were greatly strengthened. Heavy cannon were mounted at each, as well as on the face of the new fort, Fort William, commanding the river. Just at this moment Colonel Forde, fresh from the storming of Machhlipatanam, arrived, accompanied by Captain Knox, his coadjutor in that glorious event. To the first Clive assigned the command of the whole of the available force, to the latter that of the parties at Tannah fort and Charnock's battery.

These preparations were made not a moment too soon. In the second week of November the Dutch, finding further delay would not serve them, threw

* The fort of Tannah was five miles below Calcutta on the right bank of the river, Charnock's battery was nearly opposite to it.

off the mask, and forwarded to Calcutta a long remonstrance, recapitulating all their grievances, and threatening vengeance and reprisals, unless the English should renounce their claim to the right of search, and all opposition to the free progress of their ships and their vessels. Clive replied, with a specious audacity, that the English had offered no insult to the colours, attacked no property, and infringed no privileges, of the Dutch; that, if their boats had been stopped and searched, and the advance of their troops opposed, it had been by the express direction of the Núwáb, acting with the authority of the Emperor. He concluded by referring them to the Núwáb, and by offering his services as a mediator on the occasion. Notwithstanding the tone of this reply, Clive, as he records himself, was not a little embarrassed as to the course he should adopt in case the Dutch, continuing to advance, should pass the batteries below Calcutta. The responsibility of commencing hostilities against an ally of England was very great, and Clive and the Council felt grave doubts as to whether the Court of Directors would hold him justified in incurring it.

From further anxiety on this head he was saved by the conduct of the Dutch. The reply of Clive, containing as it did expressions which, though true in the letter, were the reverse of true in their plain signification,* exasperated them to a degree

* Though Clive had the authority of the Núwáb for the acts complained of by the Dutch, it was an authority which he had himself solicited for the protection of British interests; and the

beyond endurance. Without attempting further diplomatic intercourse, they attacked and captured seven small English vessels lying off Faltá, tore down the English colours, and transferred the guns and stores they carried to their own ships. Amongst the captured vessels was the despatch-boat carrying Clive's letter to Admiral Cornish, asking for assistance. At the same time, landing troops at Faltá and Riápúr, they burned the houses and effects of the English agents stationed there. Their ships then stood up the river. Having no pilots, however, their progress was necessarily slow.

This action on the part of the Dutch reassured Clive. He at once sent a despatch to the Núwáb, apprising him of the acts of violence which had been committed, and stating his wish that, as the quarrel lay only between the Dutch and the English, it might be fought out between those two nations alone. Whilst, however, asking no direct assistance, he added that the Núwáb would convince him of his sincerity and attachment if he would "directly surround their (the Dutch) subordinates, and distress them in the country to the utmost." Whilst thus writing to the Núwáb, Clive directed Forde to take possession of Bárnagar (Barnagore); to cross there the river, with his troops and four field-pieces, to Shrirámpúr (Serampore), and to march thence on Chandranagar, the object being not only to strike terror into Chinsurah, but to be

Núwáb, who had given him that authority, had encouraged and even implored the Dutch to pay no regard to it, as having been extracted from his necessities, and being therefore void.

ready to intercept the Dutch troops in case they should endeavour to gain that place by land. I shall describe in its proper place the manner in which these instructions were executed.

Meanwhile the Dutch ships were moving upwards. On the 21st they anchored in Sankrál reach, just below the point of the fire of the English batteries. The next day they landed their troops (seven hundred Europeans and eight hundred Malays) on the right bank of the river, with directions to march to Chinsurah, and then dropped down to Melancholy Point.

This action cleared the ground for Clive. He had now two distinct objects before him, each to be met on its own ground. The landing of the Dutch troops had severed them from their base—the ships which had conveyed them. To attack and overthrow these troops before they could gain a new base—that at Chinsurah being the only possible one—and, at the same time, to attack and destroy the old base, the Dutch ships—these were the clear and definite objects at which he aimed. Sending information to Forde of the landing and march of the Dutch troops, and directing Captain Knox with the parties at the batteries to join him with all possible expedition, he proceeded to deal with the Dutch ships.

I have stated in a previous page* that before the commencement of hostilities Clive had but three ships of any size at his disposal, and that he had directed

* Page 308.

these to come up close to Calcutta, so as to aid in the defences of the town. They were three Indiamen, the "Duke of Dorset," 544 tons, Captain Forrester; the "Calcutta," 761 tons, Captain Wilson; the "Hardwicke," 573 tons, Captain Sampson. They all carried guns. When the senior officer, Captain Wilson, who acted as commodore, received the order to bring his ships nearer to Calcutta, the Dutch squadron had already passed him. He had therefore followed it up steadily, anchoring some distance below it. But when, on the 23rd, the Dutch squadron, after having landed its troops, fell back to Melancholy Point, Wilson made as though he would go by them. But the Dutch commodore, noticing his intention, sent him a message to the effect that if he persisted in the attempt he would be fired upon. Wilson, having no orders to engage, at once desisted, but sent a report to Clive. Clive's answer was clear and precise. He directed Wilson to send at once a despatch to the Dutch commodore, demanding immediate restitution of the vessels, property, and British subjects he had seized, a full apology to the English flag, and his immediate departure from the river. If these terms were not complied with, Wilson was to attack the Dutch squadron.

To understand the nature of the task which Clive had imposed upon this brave sailor I may mention that whereas he had at his disposal only three vessels, each capable of carrying at the most thirty guns, the Dutch squadron was composed of four ships, the "Vlissengen," the "Bleiswyk," the "Welgeleegen,"

and the "Princess of Orange," each carrying thirty-six; of two, the "Elizabeth Dorothea" and the "Waeseld," each carrying twenty-six; and of one, the "Mossel," carrying sixteen guns. It was a force which exceeded his own by nearly two to one.

On the 24th, Wilson transmitted his demand. It was promptly refused. Upon this Wilson directed his squadron to weigh anchor and stand for the Dutch squadron. Captain Forrester, in the "Duke of Dorset," the best sailor of the three, took the lead and soon laid his ship along the "Vlissengen," which bore the flag of the Dutch commodore. He had scarcely taken up this position when the wind changed, and his consorts were unable for some time to come near him. With great gallantry, however, he attacked his antagonist, and though the mark himself for the first half-hour of other ships in the Dutch squadron, he stuck to her, and, after a combat which lasted two hours, forced her to strike. Meanwhile the "Hardwicke" and "Calcutta" had succeeded in approaching the other ships. So well were they managed and so hot was the fire they maintained that in a very short time two of their smaller adversaries cut their cables and fled, whilst a third was driven on shore. The other ships maintained the combat till the "Vlissengen" had struck, when, with one exception, they followed her example. The exception was the "Bleiswyk," the captain of which made his way to Kálpí, the English ships being too crippled to follow him. He was not, however, destined to escape. At Kálpí he met two English ships, the

"Oxford" and the "Royal George," which had arrived at the mouth of the Huglí two days before, and were now hastening upwards. They made an easy capture of the last of the Dutchmen.

In this most brilliant action the loss of the English in killed was very slight. The "Duke of Dorset," though riddled through and through, though ninety shots were in her hull, and her rigging was cut to pieces, and though many of her crew were wounded, did not lose a single man. The Dutch lost, in killed and wounded, upwards of a hundred men. On the "Vlissengen" alone thirty were killed, and more than double that number wounded. It was an action worthy to be compared with the best achievements of the British navy.

Thus successfully had been carried out one of the two clear and distinct objects which Clive had determined to accomplish. I turn now to record the manner in which he dealt with the other. The reader has seen that Clive had no sooner heard of the debarkation of the Dutch troops and of their march towards Chinsurah than he sent information to Forde and directed Captain Knox to join him with the troops manning the two river batteries. I proceed now to examine the manner in which those two officers improved their opportunities.

Obeying the first orders transmitted to him on the 19th November, Forde, at the head of a hundred Europeans, four hundred sipáhís, and four guns, had, the day following their reception, attacked and captured the Dutch factory of Bárnagar. Crossing the river to

Shrirámpúr he marched thence towards Chandranagar, and encamped on the night of the 23rd in the gardens south of the Fort. It had been his intention to march the next morning and take up a position nearer Chinsurah, which lies only three miles north of Chandranagar. But the Dutch had not noticed in vain the advantage which taking the initiative gives to fighting-men. They did not take into consideration the fact that about fourteen hundred of their own soldiers were marching on Forde's rear, and that if they could only hold their own in Chinsurah till their arrival Forde would be between two fires. They heedlessly resolved to anticipate them. They therefore sent from Chinsurah, on the evening of the 23rd, their whole available force, amounting to a hundred and twenty Europeans and three hundred native soldiers, and bade them take up a position in the ruins of Chandranagar and hinder the further progress of the English. In that position, supported by four field-pieces, Forde found and attacked them on the morning of the 24th. The numbers were about equal on both sides, but on that of the English the soldiers, native and European, had been inured to Indian warfare. The result was never doubtful. Forde drove the Dutch from their position up to the very walls of Chinsurah, and captured their guns. The arrival of Knox the same evening raised his numbers to three hundred and twenty Europeans, eight hundred native infantry, and fifty European volunteer cavalry. The Núwáb had also placed about a hundred horsemen at his disposal—not, indeed, to fight, but to spy.

From the prisoners he had taken, and from other sources, Forde learned that same evening that the Dutch force landed from the ships would certainly arrive the following day. He at once sent off an express to Clive, stating that he thought he had a fair prospect of destroying the enemy, and demanding explicit instructions as to the course he should pursue. Clive was engaged in playing whist when this note reached him. He read it; then, without quitting the table, he wrote on the back of the note in pencil: "Dear Forde, fight them immediately; I will send you the Order in Council to-morrow," and dismissed the messenger.

Armed with this authority, Forde, early on the morning of the 25th, took up at Biderra, about midway between Chandranagar and Chinsurah, a position commanding the road to the latter place. His right rested on the village of Biderra, his left on a mango grove, both of which he occupied; his front was covered by a broad and deep ditch. Securely planted behind this, his guns commanded the treeless plain in front of it. It was the very best position that could have been taken, for whilst very defensive it commanded all the approaches. At about 10 o'clock in the morning the Dutch force, led by Colonel Roussel, a French soldier of fortune, was seen advancing across the plain. As soon as they arrived within range the four guns of the English opened fire; notwithstanding the gaps they made, the Dutch still pressed on. The ditch, however, of the existence of which they were ignorant, stopped them. The con-

fusion which this necessary halt caused to their rear-most files, and the exposure of their line at the same time to a concentrated fire of small-arms from their enemies, some posted in the village, some in the grove, were fatal to the Dutch. Unable to press on, and the greater number of them ignorant of the cause of the stoppage, they fairly turned. Forde used the first moment of wavering which they displayed to launch at them his English cavalry. The small number of these was not at the moment apparent to the enemy, and the charge, made at an opportune moment, forced their masses back in disorder. Seeing the effect produced, that the Dutch were fairly beaten, the cavalry of the Núwáb, which had not responded to the invitation to accompany their European comrades in the first charge, dashed forward and completed the defeat. The Dutch and Malays, fresh from the confinement of shipboard, the latter unused to fight cavalry, then fairly turned and fled. No victory was ever more decisive. Of the seven hundred Europeans and eight hundred Malays composing the Dutch force, a hundred and twenty of the former and two hundred of the latter were left dead on the field, three hundred, in about equal proportions of both, were wounded; whilst M. Roussel, fourteen of his officers, three hundred and fifty Dutch, and two hundred Malays were made prisoners.* Some sixty of the former and two hundred and fifty of the

* I have followed in the main the account of this contest given by the Dutch East India Company. Vide Grose's *Voyage to the East Indies*, vol. ii. p. 376.

latter escaped, and of these only fourteen eventually succeeded in finding their way to Chinsurah.*

In this brilliant manner did Forde carry out the second distinct object aimed at by Clive. The policy of the latter had been carried out to the letter. By vigour, decision, and daring a danger greater than any which, since January 1757, had threatened the British settlement in Bengal had been encountered and overthrown. Of the secret understanding between the Dutch and the Núwáb there can be no doubt whatever. Clive entertained none. The Núwáb, in fact, groaning under the restraints imposed upon him by the British connection, was anxious to substitute for a foreign master a foreign ally. His troops were ready for action. Had the Dutch squadron beaten the three English ships in the river, and had Forde been beaten at Biderra, these troops would have joined the Dutch in an attack upon Calcutta. If that attack had succeeded, the Núwáb, grown wise by experience, would have imposed upon the Dutch terms far less galling to himself than those which had made him little more than a pageant sovereign guided by English counsels.

This conspiracy had been defeated by the calm decision of Clive, by the gallantry, skill, and daring of Forde, and of the officers and men, sailors as well

* "Such," writes Colonel Broome, in his admirable history of the Bengal army, "was the brilliant victory of Biderra, marked by an extraordinary degree of skill and courage, and most important in its results—and yet the name of the action is scarcely ever mentioned, and in no way commemorated."

as soldiers, who were engaged. The victory on the Huglí and the victory at Biderra brought the Dutch, hitherto so threatening, to his feet, not only for mercy, but for protection. They sorely needed the latter. Three days after the battle, Míran, the son and heir of the Núwáb, arrived from Murshidábád with six thousand horse. Up to that moment the great opponent of the English alliance, the secret instigator of the intrigues with the Dutch, Míran had come down in the hope of dictating his own terms, if, as he hoped, the English had been checked. But finding them victorious on all points, the Dutch broken, almost annihilated, he, with characteristic versatility, at once changed his language. The yoke of the English must still be borne. His policy must be to ingratiate, not offend. In this view he spoke of nothing less than the extermination of the Dutch, of expelling the remnant of them from Bengal. To protect themselves from the consequences of these threats the Dutch implored the aid of the enemy whom they had so gratuitously provoked. Clive behaved with great generosity. After the victory of Biderra he had responded to the submission of the Dutch by ordering Forde to cease all hostilities. He now proceeded to Chinsurah and succeeded in effecting an accommodation between the Dutch and the Núwáb. The terms of it bore the impress of the practical mind of a man who was resolved that an opportunity should never again be afforded to the Dutch to wage war against the English in Bengal. For, whilst it confirmed all the trading privileges

previously accorded to the former, and gave them permission to maintain a hundred and twenty-five soldiers for the protection of their factories at Chinsurah, at Kásimbázár, at Patná, and at Baleshwar (Balasore); it compelled them to send away their squadron with those prisoners recently taken by the English who would not serve the conqueror, and with any remnants of the discomfited host; to discharge all the native soldiers whom they had raised; and to agree never to carry on hostilities, to enlist or introduce troops, or to erect fortifications in the three provinces.

The other terms of the accommodation with the same people were not less satisfactory. The Dutch agreed to disavow the conduct of their fleet, to acknowledge themselves the aggressors, and to pay ten lakhs of rupees to cover all losses sustained by the English and the expenses of the war.*

The defeat of the Dutch and their consequent erasure from the list of fighting powers in Bengal formed a fitting close to an administration which had been a series of material triumphs. Arriving in Bengal in December 1756, Clive had begun the year 1757 by

* The transactions recorded in the text became the subject of correspondence and investigation in Europe. After some preliminaries the English and Dutch Governments nominated special commissioners to inquire into the matter. The conclusion arrived at was that the Dutch local authorities had been the aggressors, and that the conduct of Clive had been marked by a prudence, a judgment, and a generosity which entitled him to unqualified commendation.

recapturing Calcutta. He had followed up this conquest by forcing the Núwáb to loosen his hold on the possessions of the Company in Bengal. Noting then that the declaration of war between France and England would give the Núwáb an opportunity, for which even then he was hoping, of joining with the French at Chandranagar to strike again at Calcutta, he, suddenly and with very little warning, dealt a blow at the French which paralysed for ever all possibility of action on their part in Bengal. Left, then, face to face with the irritated Núwáb, he played him as a skilful angler plays a well-hooked salmon. Now he gave him line, now he let him run with the stream, now he checked him; at last he gave him the butt, and thoroughly exhausted him. The boy, Siráju'd daulah, had never the smallest chance with the cool, calculating, unscrupulous craftsman who was bent on dethroning him. In due time Plassey came, and on the seat which Plassey vacated Clive placed one of his own instruments, a man whom he had thoroughly looked over and bought. This man soon felt that in consenting to act as an instrument in the hands of Clive he had in very deed bartered his independence. He kicked, to no purpose, against his position. Circumstances were too strong for him. In vain did he vow that never would he invoke the aid of the English. In every great crisis he was compelled to invoke that aid. To this man, weary, worn-out, disgusted with the mere pageantry—almost all that he possessed—of sovereignty, it at last occurred that a combination with another European power would rid him of his

Frankenstein. But one European power was available —the Dutch. A confidential exchange of ideas with that people soon made him aware that in them he would find willing co-operators. It was a last, but not a desperate chance. The Dutch, acting secretly, could concentrate on the scene of action more ships, more men, than the English had available, and the Núwáb would join them the moment fortune should favour them with her first smile. The bargain was made. The Dutch performed their part of the compact: the Núwáb prepared his army to carry out his part. But again all was vain. The numbers of the Dutch, the secret hatred of the Núwáb, were shattered before the qualities of the man who, conscious that he had his enemies in his grasp, could so command his feelings that, whilst they stormed and intrigued without, he could give his full attention to a game of whist within. The calm sleep of Napoleon before Austerlitz, whilst in spirit akin to, does not, in the self-command it betrays, surpass the rubber played by Clive before Biderra. After that victory Clive stood again face to face with the Núwáb, but it was with a Núwáb who had lost every outside chance of re-asserting his independence, and who was then and for ever afterwards his puppet.

It was when this seal had been set to his achievements in Bengal that Clive felt he might safely take the repose which he so much needed. Up to that time he had turned a deaf ear to the orders of the Madras Government—which had only lent him to Bengal—to the insinuations conveyed by half-hearted

support from the India Office, to the advice of candid friends. He had determined not to leave Bengal so long as there should remain any danger threatening the English settlement. With the destruction of the aggressive power of the last of its European rivals all danger had disappeared. Clive felt then that he might return to England to recruit the health which exposure and unremitting attention to business of a most absorbing character had impaired, and to enjoy a relaxation from the cares and anxieties which for three years had occupied him incessantly.

Before, however, he could leave Bengal, it was necessary that he should make efficient provision for the conduct of the civil and military affairs of the Presidency. With respect to the former, he was placed in a position of some embarrassment with respect to his own colleagues. Four of these, Messrs. Holwell, Playdell, Sumner, and McGuire, had announced their intention of retiring. Of the abilities of many of the others, especially of Messrs. Watts and Warren Hastings, Clive has recorded his opinion. They, the two mentioned especially, had served him with a zeal and an energy not to be surpassed. Mr. Watts in particular, had rendered very signal service. It is difficult to understand why these gentlemen were passed over, unless we are prepared to admit that the claims of private friendship weighed more with Clive in this instance than the demands of the public service. They were passed over, however, in favour of Mr. Vansittart, of the Madras Presidency, Clive's intimate and trusted friend. The comparative

youth of Watts and Warren Hastings was alleged as the reason of their non-selection. It cannot fail to strike every candid mind that such a reason was the very last which should have been advanced, with reference to two men who had already displayed very high qualities in Bengal, by a man who had made his own mark before he was twenty-seven. The result proved, moreover, that on no ground was the super-session justifiable. Mr. Vansittart was, I believe, a conscientious English gentleman. But he did not possess the force of character necessary to enable a man to enforce the policy which his inner conscience commended to him. The departure of Clive let loose a deluge of passions which a strong man only could control. Vansittart was not a strong man. Nevertheless, on the recommendation of Clive, he was nominated to be his successor.*

There remained yet the appointment of a successor in the command of the army. For this post Clive had recommended Colonel Forde. Forde had come out to India as a Major in the 39th Foot. His conversation, his knowledge, the qualities of firmness, of coolness and calmness in danger, the capacity for command which he displayed, had, at an earlier period, won the admiration of Clive. In the choice of officers for command Clive was ever above jealousy. He was too sensible that his own reputation depended on the quality of the officers who served him. He always, therefore, endeavoured to procure

* He afterwards became one of Clive's bitterest enemies.

the very best men. Although, therefore, Forde did not accompany the force which left Madras in the autumn of 1756 to recover Calcutta, Clive never lost sight of him. When, then, just a year later, Major Kilpatrick, commanding the Company's troops in Bengal, died, Clive had urged that the appointment should be bestowed upon Major Forde. The proposal, made to the local authorities in Madras, was acceded to; and Forde, leaving the 39th, then under orders for England, came round to Calcutta in April 1758, with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. In the October following Forde was despatched with a force of five hundred Europeans and two thousand sipáhís to the Northern Sirkárs to expel the French from those important districts. The courage and conduct he displayed, how he defeated the Marquis de Conflans at the decisive battle of Kondúr, and forced him to surrender with his whole army, a superior force in Europeans, at Machhlípatanam, how he laid a firm foundation for the replacement of French influence by English influence at the Court of Haidarábád, has been already mentioned. His reward for these splendid services had been dismissal. The Court of Directors had not approved his nomination to the command of their troops in Bengal. Forde, thus unceremoniously treated, made over to the next senior officer, a captain, the command of the force with which he had conquered for the Company a most valuable and important province, and came round, accompanied by Captain Knox, to Bengal. How he arrived in the very nick of time, just at the moment when the Dutch were threatening

Calcutta; how he beat them; the skill, energy, and conduct he displayed; have been recorded in this chapter. This was the man to whom Clive would willingly have made over the command of his army. For some unaccountable reason, the Court of Directors refused to ratify his choice.*

Forced, then, to look elsewhere Clive cast his eyes on Colonel Eyre Coote, who had just then returned with increased rank to India. But Eyre Coote could not be spared from Madras. His selection then fell upon Major Caillaud, of the Madras service. Clive had known Caillaud personally, and had marked the high character and military ability he had displayed on several occasions. He wrote then to Madras requesting the transfer of his services. He insisted at the same time on the despatch to Bengal of the troops which, sent from England for that presidency, had been detained on the coast. The request was acceded to, and on the 27th November Caillaud came round bringing with him two hundred Europeans, chiefly foreigners and recruits. He and the officers who accompanied him were at once transferred to the Bengal establishment. That establishment was further strengthened the following month by the return of the troops who, under Forde, had expelled the French from the Northern Sirkárs, by the enlistment into its ranks of the greater number of the prisoners taken

* Many years after, 1769, Forde was appointed a coadjutor of Messrs. Vansittart and Scrafton to supervise the Government of Bengal. The ship which conveyed them to India was lost.

at Biderra, and by the arrival of further recruits. These augmentations and the raising of the strength of the native battalions to a thousand men,* increased the European force at the disposal of Clive to little more than a thousand; the native force to five thousand.

With this force, before he could leave Bengal, it was necessary that he should make a demonstration. The bold attempt of the Dutch, whilst it had engaged the secret sympathies of Mír J'afar, had roused likewise the cupidity of the Sháhzádah. This young prince, not reconciled to the Court of Dihlí, had, in the jungles of Bundelkhand, meditated a scheme whereby, in the general confusion which would be caused by the success of the Dutch, he might reap substantial advantage. Summoning, then, to his standard most of his old supporters, and attracting others from the districts about him, he advanced towards the Karamnásá. To check this advance and at the same time to introduce to Mír J'afar the officer upon whom, after his own departure, he could entirely depend, Clive ordered Caillaud to proceed with three hundred and fifty Europeans and a thousand sipáhís to Murshidábád. Caillaud arrived at that capital on the 26th December, Clive on the 6th January following. The ceremony of the introduction of the new commander was followed by arrangements for the march to Patná of his force and of the

* Each native battalion was officered thus: one captain, one lieutenant, one ensign, and four sergeants,

army of the Núwáb under his son Míran. Then ensued the leave-taking and the departure. The last scene between Clive and the Núwáb whom he had created must have been painful to both. It was because he was his creation that Clive liked Mír J'afar. He believed that his sentiments were reciprocated, and though this, in the sense felt by Clive, may be doubted, it was certainly a fact that Mír J'afar regarded Clive as a tower of strength upon which he could lean in any difficulty. He must have felt at this supreme moment that he was parting with the one Englishman upon whom he could absolutely rely, who would support him against all other rivals and opponents. Had it been given to him to glance into futurity he would have seen, indeed, that in losing the Englishman who had made him, he was indeed losing the support without which he could not stand. It was well observed by one of his contemporaries that when Clive left Bengal "it appeared as if the soul was departing from the body." It was more even than that. The spoils of Plassey had roused all the worst passions of Englishmen in India. When the victor of that battle and his friends were succeeded by men who had had no share in those spoils, but who longed to reap on the same field, not only did it become clear that the soul had departed from the government, but that its place was occupied by passions of the meanest and most sordid character. This was the danger to be apprehended by Mír J'afar. In parting with Clive he was parting with his truest supporter, he was preparing a welcome to men pre-

pared to despoil Bengal at his expense, just as he had despoiled it at the expense of Siráju'd daulah.

At last even this painful leave-taking was accomplished. On the 14th January, Clive returned to Calcutta. Staying there some six weeks to complete all the necessary arrangements, he made over the government to Mr. Holwell, pending the arrival in Madras of Mr. Vansittart, and sailed for England on the 25th February. Shortly before his departure he had stated to Vansittart, that with the arrival of the troops, then expected, and which had since landed, Bengal would be "out of all danger but that of venality and corruption." Words most true, prophetic even in their truth! It was venality and corruption, greed and lust for gold, which, in the few years following his departure, brought imminent danger on the great structure he had built up, which once again made the very existence of the English settlement dependent on the fate of one decisive battle!

# CHAPTER XIII.

## The Brewing of the Storm.

Clive returned to England in the autumn of 1760 a very rich man. He had received in presents from the Núwáb and in prize-money about three hundred thousand pounds. The annual income of the jaghír bestowed upon him by Mír J'afar amounted, by his own admission, to twenty-seven thousand pounds; and he had still the comparatively small fortune acquired in Southern India. So circumstanced he was able to give free course to his ruling passions. Prominent amongst these was ambition. He had raised himself in India only to take a prominent position in England; and, in times of peace, this end could only be accomplished by entering Parliament.

That during the long course of a voyage round the Cape, Clive must have deeply meditated as to the course he should follow to attain his ambitious aims may be accepted as certain. It is as certain, too, that he expected that the way would be made smooth to him by the conferring upon him a title which would admit

him to the House of Lords. But though Clive's reception by his youthful sovereign was gratifying, though the ministers and the Court of Directors were loud in their professions to serve him, he did not immediately attain any honour. It is true that very soon after his arrival in England he was attacked by an illness which threatened to terminate his existence, and the recovery from which was long and painful, but the delay in according to him some mark of the approval of the Crown must be sought for on other grounds. There can be no doubt but that many of his despatches from India had given great offence at the India Office, and it is probable that the latent jealousy of the Court combined with the indifference of the Ministry to delay the conferring of any honour at all, and finally to cause it to take a shape which would not entitle its possessor to a seat in the House of Lords. After a long delay Clive was created an Irish peer.

Some time before Clive had left Bengal he had transmitted to the India Office a letter in which he had commented very freely upon their shortcomings. This despatch had roused the ire of the Court of Directors to such an extent that they had, after his departure, removed from office the members of Council who had joined him in signing it. But another letter, addressed by Clive, in January 1759, not to the Court but to Mr. Pitt, then Secretary of State, had whetted still further the animosity of the former. In that very remarkable letter Clive had foreshadowed the later results which would,

he contended, accrue from the collapse of native rule in Bengal—the acquisition by the English of three large and important provinces. He had proceeded to contend that so large a sovereignty would be too extensive for a mercantile company, and, moreover, that a mercantile company, unless assisted by the nation, would be unable to maintain it. He had, therefore, suggested that the Crown should take upon itself the responsibility of governing the new empire, certain to accrue, in the natural course of events, to British hands. Unfortunately, Mr. Pitt was not in a position then to put into execution a plan, which foreshadowed the far less complete measure which his gifted son subsequently carried out, and which received its full development exactly one hundred years subsequent to the date of Clive's proposal. There are many living who can remember the unwillingness with which the Court of Directors of our own time parted with the interests which they regarded as vested for ever in their body. The dislike, then, which their predecessors of a century earlier must have felt towards the man who, in advance of the age in which he lived, dared to make a similar proposition, may be easily conceived.

The delay in bestowing upon Clive a mark of the approval of the Crown was not the only mortification he experienced at this period. The Court of Directors showed their deep-rooted hostility by disputing his right to the jaghír bestowed upon him by Mír J'afar, and actually sent instructions to their Council at Calcutta to pay into the Company's treasury the

amount due as rental for the same, and to take the necessary steps to enable the Court to compel a refunding by Clive of the sums he had already received on account of it. Clive resisted this act of tyranny, and filed a bill in Chancery against the Company. The matter was about to be carried to extreme lengths, the most eminent lawyers of the day were engaged, when, before it could be brought to an issue, the state of affairs in Bengal forced the hand of the Court. From being bitterly hostile to the man who had given them their influence, they became suddenly his humble slaves.

To understand how this came to pass it is necessary to enter somewhat more into detail. Clive had, at the general election of 1761, obtained a seat in the House of Commons. The Duke of Newcastle was prime minister, Pitt and Bute were secretaries of State. But Pitt almost immediately resigned, the following year the Duke of Newcastle followed his example, and Lord Bute formed a new ministry from which Pitt and Newcastle were excluded. To this ministry, and more especially to the peace which it concluded in 1763,* Clive offered a determined opposition. He appears, at this time, to have attached himself personally to George Grenville, and to have accepted him as his political leader. His opposition to the ministry greatly strengthened the influence of the strong party opposed to him in the India Office, for the leader of that party, the Chairman of the Court, Mr. Lawrence

* The Peace of Paris.

Sulivan, was a firm supporter of Lord Bute. The fall of that lord's ministry in 1763, and the consequent accession of Lord Grenville to office, weakened, however, the effect of that hostile alliance.

It was in that year, prior to the fall of the Bute ministry, that Clive, bitterly resenting the manner in which the Court of Directors had treated him, the contempt with which they had received his recommendations, especially those on behalf of Forde and his other companions in arms who had been neglected, endeavoured to break down the power of Mr. Sulivan by the only means left open to him. It happened that the re-election of that gentleman and his friends to their offices depended upon the votes of the proprietors of East India stock. To turn those votes against Mr. Sulivan, Clive left no means untried. He purchased stock to the value of a hundred thousand pounds, and distributed it in parcels of a thousand pounds each amongst friends upon whom he could rely. But all was in vain. Victorious at the meeting by a show of hands, Clive was beaten at the poll. Secure, now, in his seat, Sulivan persuaded his colleagues to pass the measure which would have deprived Clive of the jaghír which had been bestowed upon him by Mír J'afar.

It was when the contest which this extreme measure provoked was about to be transferred to the court of law, that ship after ship from India conveyed the information that the edifice which Clive had erected in Bengal was crumbling to the earth under the effete and corrupt rule of the government which had

succeeded his own. Mír J'afar had been dethroned, Mír Kásim had succeeded. Then followed, in quick succession, the arbitrary measures of the Bengal Government, the protest against them by Mír Kásim, the unjust attack upon Patná replied to by the defeat of the attacking party—the first defeat sustained by the English in the field. The proprietors of East India stock became seriously alarmed. The English interests in Bengal seemed to stand at the mercy of a prince flushed with victory, justly enraged, and actuated by a secret longing to rid Bengal for ever of the hated islanders. Under the influence of alarm the public mind of England always forms rapidly and acts vigorously. Instances are frequent in our own time of the promptness alike of the thought and the action. When the news reached England, in 1849, that Lord Gough had fought an indecisive battle with the Sikhs at Chilianwálá, Sir Charles Napier was within twenty-four hours on his way to supersede him. When General Anson died on his way to Dihlí in 1857, Sir Colin Campbell was despatched with equal promptitude to take his place. When Lord Elgin died in 1863, at the moment when our troops were waging a bloody war with the tribes bordering the Panjáb, public instinct pointed to Sir John Lawrence as the one man alone whose presence on the spot would dominate every difficulty. So it has almost always been. With the exception of the period of the war of American independence, England has always possessed the man fitted to cope with a particular

emergency, and the sound instinct of the people has insisted on the employment of that particular man. That instinct was alive at the period of which I am writing. No sooner had ship after ship brought to England the account of the successive declensions of prosperity in Bengal of which I have made mention, culminating in the prospect of an immediate destruction of English interests in that quarter, than the instincts of the holders of stock, the instincts of members of Parliament, the instincts of the people pointed to the man who had laid the foundation stone of the threatened edifice as the one man who could save it. The action was as prompt as it has been in more modern times. The proprietors of stock met in full court, and insisted that Clive should be invited to return to the scene of his triumphs. They insisted, moreover, that he should return thither with full powers, not merely as president of a Council which might thwart and impede him, but as Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief of all the Company's possessions in India. They insisted, moreover, that the petty persecution instituted against their hero at the instigation of Mr. Sulivan should cease, and that the jaghír should be restored without cavil, without after-thought, but fully, completely, absolutely.

It was a proud moment for Clive when the men who had rejected him for Sulivan, the real actor who had gained for them all the consideration they possessed for the very common clay which had nearly lost it for them, came to his feet to urge him, to

implore him to save them — to impose his own terms, only to save them. He was not very eager to comply. He had had some experience during the past four years of the value placed by politicians upon soldiers. He had seen how they were used as efficient tools and then cast aside as old iron. He had seen it in the instance of Forde, the conqueror of the Northern Sirkárs, and of Caillaud, who had succeeded himself in command of the army; he had seen it in his own person. He had had many disenchantments. He had felt how great services go for little the moment the performer of them becomes no longer necessary. Much, then, as the patriotic feeling within him urged him to accept the proffered position, as much did the deep distrust he felt of the India Office prompt him to refuse it.

After deep consideration the nobler feeling prevailed, and Clive consented to proceed to Bengal as Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief, but upon two conditions. The first of these was that the Court of Directors should accede to his proposal regarding the jaghír; the second that Mr. Sulivan should be removed from the office of Chairman of the Court of Directors. After some discussion and great opposition on the part of the Court of Directors these terms were acceded to. Mr. Rous succeeded Mr. Sulivan as Chairman, and the proposal made by Clive regarding the jaghír, to the effect that whilst it should still remain in the hands of the Company his right of possession should be confirmed for ten years, was accepted with enthusiasm. On the other

hand, though Clive was invested with the powers of Governor, President in Council, and Commander-in-Chief in Bengal, the absolute powers which had been claimed for him were, to a certain extent, restricted by the nomination of four gentlemen to form with him a select committee authorised to act in Bengal on their own authority, whenever they might deem it expedient, without consulting the Council, which, in effect, was superseded. These arrangements and others of a lesser importance having been concluded, Clive sailed for Bengal on the 4th June 1764.

Whilst he is making the tedious voyage to Bengal I propose to glance at the events which had combined to force upon the people of England a sense of the necessity of his return.

# CHAPTER XIV.

## The Rule of Corruption.

I cannot too often repeat that, before Clive had left Calcutta in 1759, he had written to his successor, Mr. Vansittart, a letter which contained these words: "The expected reinforcements will, in my opinion, put Bengal out of all danger but that of venality and corruption." The reinforcements did arrive, but the spirit of venality and corruption followed them. It was the indulgence in those two vices which shook the English power in Bengal to its foundation.

Mr. Vansittart was himself in many respects a not unworthy representative of the British power in the East. His ideas were true, his instincts were sound, his wish to do the right thing was incontestable. Where he failed was in force of character. He could not impress his will upon others. With but a casting vote in Council, and at a critical period disagreeing with the majority of that Council, he was, when the

real crisis came, powerless. The communication with England was so long and so uncertain that the differences between himself and his colleagues could not be settled by an appeal to that country. Resignation would only strengthen the hands of his enemies. Under similar circumstances a Clive would probably have suspended his colleagues and seized the reins of power. But Vansittart possessed neither the strength of will nor the commanding influence which only would have justified such a course of action. Well-meaning, but overborne by men guided by "corruption and venality," he remained a passive spectator of evils which he could not prevent.

At the outset of his career in Bengal this was not so. He had for his colleagues, then, men who had served under Clive and who, though mortified by the nomination of a stranger from Madras to a post for which each one of them considered himself peculiarly fitted, were still unprepared to offer him a factious opposition. Thus he had at his side Mr. Holwell, one of the survivors of the Black Hole tragedy, and who had acted as Governor in the short interval which had elapsed between the departure of Clive and his own arrival, Mr. Amyatt, Mr. Playdell, Mr. Sumner, Mr. McGuire and Major Caillaud.

Before, however, Mr. Vansittart had taken up his office events of the gravest character had happened. With Mr. Holwell as acting President, and under the able leading of Major Caillaud and Captain Knox, the war against the Sháhzádah—become by his father's death Emperor—was being successfully prosecuted,

when, in the course of it, a circumstance befell which was the immediate cause of all the complications that followed.

This event was the death of Míran, son and declared successor of Mír J'afar. On the 2nd July 1760 Míran, campaigning with Major Caillaud, was struck dead by lightning. In itself his death was a relief; Míran possessed almost all the vices which disgrace human nature. He has been described as being rash without courage, cruel and suspicious without cause, false and treacherous without an object, avaricious without economy, and extravagant without liberality, sensual in the lowest sense of sensuality, and extravagant without taste. The disappearance from the scene of such a character, heir to a quasi-throne, could not be other than an unmixed advantage. But his death raised the question of his successor. Who was that successor to be? Mír J'afar was old, older even than his years, his health and strength were visibly declining; the eldest of his remaining sons had but just attained the age of thirteen. It is a proof of the enormous influence which the battle of Plassey and its consequences had acquired for the English that the arrangements which the death of the heir to the Súbahdárí of Bengal, Bihár, and Orísá had rendered necessary rested, by general consent, in the Calcutta Council.

That Council had come to no decision when Mr. Vansittart, three weeks after the death of Míran, arrived to take up his office. The gravity of the crisis so impressed him that he at once summoned

Major—just become Colonel—Caillaud from the army, to assist at the deliberations which were to follow his arrival.

Major Caillaud possessed great experience in war, strong common sense, and great decision of character. His experience, founded on the negotiations which he had only recently been carrying on with the Mughul, had satisfied him that the course hitherto pursued by the English in treating the Núwáb of the three provinces as a quasi-independent prince, was an eminently false course; that opportunity should be taken of the death of Míran to reduce the Núwáb to his proper position—that of governor subordinate to the Court of Dihlí; that he should be forced to discharge his rabble army, and that the English Government should enter into direct communication with the Mughul as Díwán of the provinces. This opinion, which was also the opinion of Mr. Holwell, had considerable weight in the Council. Had it prevailed, the complications which followed might have been avoided. But just as the discussion upon it was tending to a favourable conclusion, there appeared upon the scene an envoy from the Court of Murshidábád, who, appealing to two passions, cupidity and ambition, managed to divert the favourable course of thought to another channel, and to procure a decision highly favourable to himself—and to the members of Council.

This agent was no other than Mír Muhammad Kásim Khán, commonly called Mir Kásim Khán, son-in-law of the Núwáb. The death of Míran had made

Mír Kásim the most prominent person in the three provinces. He was forty years of age, clever, ambitious, unscrupulous, far-sighted, a lover of his country, and possessing a keen sense of its requirements. He hated the English—and he hated them with reason. The battle of Plassey and its consequences had made them masters of the provinces his ancestors had gained for the Mughul. Every step taken by Mír J'afar had tended to increase their hold upon the country. From the yoke they had imposed Mír J'afar was unable to shake himself free. But Mír Kásim felt within him the power to create a spirit which should counterbalance that pernicious influence. He only wanted the opportunity. The death of Míran gave him that opportunity. It was not yet too late. He proceeded then to Calcutta with the secret resolve to buy from the Calcutta Council, at their own price, the Súbahdárí of Bengal, Bihár, and Orísá!

He bought it. After many discussions the Council, on the 27th September 1760, signed a treaty transferring all the real power in Murshidábád to Mír Kásim for the following principal considerations: 1st, that the districts of Bardhwán, Midnapúr, and Chátgáon (Chittagong) should be granted, by sanads, to the English; that certain advantages in Silhat should be conceded to them; that the jewels of Mír J'afar should be redeemed by cash payment; that the following sums should be paid, as presents, viz. to Mr. Vansittart five hundred thousand rupees; to Mr. Holwell, two hundred and seventy thousand; to

Messrs. Sumner and McGuire,* each, two hundred and fifty-five thousand; to Colonel Caillaud, two hundred thousand; to Mr. Culling Smith and to Captain Yorke, one hundred and thirty-four thousand each. Three days after the signature of the treaty Mír Kásim set out for Murshidábád. Two days later Mr. Vansittart followed him. A week or two later Mír J'afar was on his way to Calcutta as a pensioner, and Mír Kásim reigned in his stead. This was a revolution, and revolutions rarely calm the passions. This one, in particular, had had the effect of confirming the view, introduced by the corrupt transactions with Mír J'afar previous to Plassey, that the special use of a Súbahdár of the three provinces was to supply the members of the Calcutta Council with private funds as they might require them.† A circumstance came, shortly after the transaction with Mír Kásim, to prove the truth of this theory. In a previous chapter‡ I have mentioned how Clive and his Council had commented most strongly, in a letter, dated 29th December 1759, on the conduct of the Court of Directors. The reply to this remonstrance had been a letter, dated 21st January 1761, dismissing from the service Messrs. Holwell, Playdell,

* The members of Council mentioned in a previous page, Messrs. Amyatt and Playdell, had been nominated to other appointments. Mr. Amyatt subsequently, however, returned to Calcutta.

† This was the view stated a little later by Mr. Scrafton, a very able man, who took a considerable part in the negotiations immediately preceding and following Plassey.

‡ Page 331.

Sumner, and McGuire. Before this despatch, however, reached Calcutta, Mr. Holwell had resigned. The three other gentlemen were now removed. Others, Mr. Ellis, a man of very violent temper, Mr. Smyth, Mr. Verelst, and Mr. Warren Hastings, filled the vacancies. By this change the party in opposition to Mr. Vansittart obtained the majority in the Council. Indeed, from this time, it was they who ruled, Mr. Vansittart being supported only by Mr. Warren Hastings.

Meanwhile Mír Kásim had begun to put in practice the policy by which he hoped to secure practical independence for the country he had been called upon to administer. The war in which he, as an ally of the English, found himself engaged with the Emperor was brought to a conclusion in June 1761. No sooner had his territories been evacuated alike by the supporters of the imperial authority and by the English, than Mír Kásim took the first step in his long-meditated project. This was to remove from power all the subordinate governors who had shown either partiality to the English or hostility to himself. The reasons he put forward for the removal were of a less political character. The men removed were said to have embezzled State moneys, to have taken bribes, to have misgoverned. Their places were filled by men of character and ability devoted to the new Núwáb. To be further away from the surveillance which the English had exercised over Mír J'afar at Murshidábád, Mír Kásim then removed his capital to Mungér (Monghyr), three hundred and seventy miles by the river

route from Calcutta, and containing a strong fortress. He proceeded at once to add to the strength of this place. Next, by the exercise of strict economy, and by compelling the plunderers of the State to disgorge, he paid off his monetary obligations to the English—thus avoiding the rock on which the fortunes of Mír J'afar had been wrecked. He then turned his attention to his army. Disbanding the irregular infantry corps of his predecessors, he re-formed them on a European model. To train them he enlisted adventurers—Frenchmen, Germans, Armenians, even English, wherever he could find them—men who had been soldiers. Conspicuous amongst these were the Alsatian, Reinhard, better known later as Samrú or Sombre, and the Armenians, Markar and Aratoon. By the exertion of these men, animated by his own constant supervision, Mír Kásim, by the end of 1762, had on foot, ready for action, armed and trained on the European principle, a force of twenty-five thousand infantry and a regiment of excellent artillery. Provident in all things, he had, in the meanwhile, built a foundry for casting cannon, and from this his workmen were able to turn out guns equal to any which could be brought against him. These measures, and another which he brought to a high degree of perfection—the reform of his revenue system—were inspired by but one motive, distrust of the English. Good reason had he for that distrust. The two vices, regarding which Clive had declared to Mr. Vansittart that they constituted the only danger to English rule in Bengal, reigned supreme in the re-

modelled Calcutta Council. In vain did Mr. Vansittart and Mr. Hastings plead for statesmanlike action. Their colleagues had but one thought—to enrich themselves. To hasten this consummation they encouraged the abuse of the rule by which an English pass secured for country goods immunity from taxation. This abuse led to confusion of the worst character, and to the ruin of the Núwáb's subjects. European passes were openly sold; in course of time, they were forged. The evil rose at last to such a head that it had become impossible to test the genuineness of any pass. The result was that the honest native traders were ruined and the revenues of the Núwáb suffered. In vain did Mír Kásim represent the evils to the Calcutta Council. For a long time the majority refused to listen; and it was only when they were wearied by the repeated appeals supported by two of their colleagues whose dissentient reasons would certainly find a hearing in England, that they delegated full powers to Mr. Vansittart, then about to proceed to Mungér, to settle the question once and for ever.

The interview between Vansittart and Mír Kásim took place in January 1763. When two men armed with full powers, each anxious to arrive at a conclusion, meet to discuss its terms, a satisfactory compromise is almost always the result. Vansittart, it is true, found the Núwáb smarting under the sense of the real injuries which he and his people were suffering from the greed of the English, and in no mood to give way. He persuaded him—with great difficulty,

however—to agree to a compromise on terms still very advantageous to the English. These were that whilst the servants of the Company should be allowed to carry on the inland private trade, on payment of a fixed duty of nine per cent. on all goods, the native traders should pay twenty-five per cent.; further that no passes should be valid unless they were signed by the Company's agent. In agreeing, very unwillingly, to these terms, Mír Kásim expressed his opinion that the English would not observe them; but that, even if they did, they would not remedy the evils complained of. He declared himself ready, however, to give the scheme a fair trial, but he warned Vansittart that if it should not succeed he would abolish all duties and throw the trade open.

Mr. Vansittart had made the compromise, a most favourable compromise for English interests; the Calcutta Council rejected it. Careless of the public interest, of consequences, greedy only of gain, regarding the Núwáb and the natives as a race born to be swindled for their advantage, they insisted that the English private trade should be subjected to no duty whatever, the trade in salt alone excepted, and on this they were ready to agree to a duty of two and a half per cent. They would not listen to any alteration of these terms, and they expressed their opinions in a manner natural to men whose instincts were solely money-making.

The Núwáb, meanwhile, trusting to the formal engagements he had entered into with Mr. Vansittart—engagements signed, sealed, and delivered—had issued

orders for their being carried out at once. He then started on an expedition to Nipál. He returned, a month later, unsuccessful from that raid, only to find that Vansittart's agreement had been disallowed, and that the members of the Calcutta Council were bent upon making the last state of things worse than the first. His mind was made up on the spot. He at once issued a mandate abolishing all duties whatever, and establishing free trade throughout his dominions.

This bold and prudent measure—for, even if judged by the result, personal ruin was preferable to the lingering torture to which the policy of the Calcutta Council subjected him—roused all the worst passions of the corrupt clique in the British capital. They declared that the Núwáb had not the power to issue laws affecting their trade, and that the edict establishing free trade was a distinct declaration of war. Yielding, however, for the moment, to the strong representations of Messrs. Vansittart and Hastings, they despatched two of their members, Messrs. Hay and Amyatt, to Mungér, to reason with the Núwáb. These gentlemen arrived safely at his capital. They found him determined not to yield on the subject of free trade, convinced that the English intended to drive him to extremities. How far they might have succeeded in persuading him to abate his pretensions, had the Council been content to leave the negotiations in their hands, may never be known. But whilst they were reasoning at Mungér, Mr. Ellis, the most violent of the senior servants of the Company, and who had been appointed to the agency at

Bánkípúr, was making open preparations to attack the Núwáb's city of Patná. The Núwáb still tried to avert hostilities. He detained at Mungér a fleet of boats containing ammunitions of war intended for the force at Bánkípúr, and he begged the Calcutta Council to remove the English force from that place to Mungér, where it would be powerless for mischief. The Calcutta Council refused, and, bent on war, directed Messrs. Amyatt and Hay to leave Mungér, notifying at the same time to Ellis the order they had given to that effect. This action precipitated the crisis. Ellis, believing that Amyatt and Hay had left Mungér, and aware that the Núwáb's troops were on their way to reinforce the garrison of Patná, directed the troops at his disposal, commanded by Colonel Carstairs, to surprise that city. Carstairs made the attempt on the 23rd June, was momentarily successful, and allowed his troops to disperse for drink and plunder. Whilst they were thus dispersed the reinforcements sent by the Núwáb arrived, retook the city, and then besieged the English in their turn at Bánkípúr. Pressed hard, the English attempted (29th June) to escape by night into Awadh (Oudh). But meanwhile other detachments of the Núwáb's troops had occupied their line of retreat. Pursued by the men who had besieged them they were thus placed between two fires. By both these parties they were, on the 1st July, attacked and completely defeated. It was only, however, after Colonel Carstairs, several officers, and many of their men had been killed, that the survivors laid down their arms and surrendered at discretion.

Amongst the prisoners was the most prominent author of the war, Mr. Ellis.

The attack upon Patná and its results had the effect of clearing the position. Thenceforth it was a war to the death between the Núwáb and the English. The former, in a letter of remarkable ability addressed to the Calcutta Council, reminded them of the provocation they had given him, of the promises they had broken, and called upon them to return to him the three districts whose resources they had misused, and to make compensation for the violence and oppression they had carried on in his territories. The English replied in a manner which had at least the merit of being thorough. The Government, which had been bribed by Mír Kásim to depose Mír J'afar, now accepted other bribes from Mír J'afar to reinstate him at the expense of Mír Kásim. Having concluded an arrangement with the former, they declared war against the latter, and, in a proclamation, invited all the people of the three provinces to return to their allegiance to their reinstated master. At the same time they put their army in motion against Mír Kásim.

Fortunately for the English, their army, though small in numbers, was led by a consummate soldier. It is not too much to say that never has the British army produced a soldier more capable in all respects than Major John Adams. He could plan a campaign and lead an army in a manner not to be surpassed. The officers who surrounded him were all men who had won their spurs. Knox, distinguished in the

campaign of the Northern Ṣirkárs and at Biderra; Yorke, shot through both thighs at Machhlípatanam; Irving, Moran, and Glenn, were all men worthy of their leader. It was well that they were so, for the campaign upon which they were about to enter would try all their energies. With a force at the outset smaller, and never very much larger, than that which fought at Plassey, they would have to confront an army of trained soldiers led by men devoted to their chiefs, and united by the bond of hatred to the foreigner.

It is not necessary to give in this place a detailed account of the campaign that followed. It will suffice to say that never had Indian troops fought so well before, never have they fought better since. But their efforts, supreme as they were, were shattered against British determination and British leading. On the 17th July a very large body of Mír Kásim's irregular troops hurled themselves in vain against a small detachment of native infantry and European artillery, led by Lieutenant Glenn, on the banks of the A'jí. Almost victorious, they were in the end repulsed. Two days later the Núwáb's main army was defeated, after a most obstinate battle, by Major John Adams, near Katwá. Here victory long hovered between the two armies; at one time it seemed within the grasp of the troops of the Núwáb, and had the horsemen who had been repulsed on the A'jí, on the 17th, not refused to act, they might have gained it. As it was, the battle was long doubtful, and was only decided in the end by the opportune

death of the enemy's leader. On the 24th, Murshidábád was occupied by Mír J'afar, and on the 2nd August another obstinate, and for long a very doubtful, battle was fought between the rival parties on the field of Ghériah. Here, too, victory for a long time seemed to smile on Mír Kásim. His troops broke the right wing of the English, and threw their centre into disorder. Had the blow been vigorously followed up the English force must have been destroyed. But the success of the English on the right, and the failure of the enemy to employ to the greatest profit a decisive moment, changed the fortunes of the day. Mír Kásim's army fell back beaten, but not destroyed. The game was not yet lost. To reach Mungér the English had to traverse the defiles and hill ranges of Rájmahal. These had been strongly fortified. At one of these passes, U'ndwá Nálá, a pass of enormous strength, Mír Kásim had posted the flower of his army. Here, he thought, was a barrier strong enough to keep even the English at bay.

For about a month it did so keep them at bay. So unassailable was the position that Major Adams dared not attack it till he had placed his two heavy guns in battery against it. Even then success seemed impossible. On the early morn of the 5th September, however, in consequence of information received from a deserter, he attempted to storm the position. He succeeded: the enemy were surprised and destroyed. The annals of war do not record a more decisive victory than that of U'ndwá Nálá.

Thenceforth opposition in the field ceased. Pressing forward, the English leader traversed the Rájmahal hills, occupied Mungér without resistance, captured Patná on the 6th November, and forced Mír Kásim to throw himself upon the protection of the Núwáb-Vazír of Awadh (Oudh).

This brilliant campaign accomplished all, and more than all, the objects of the Calcutta Council. It expelled Mír Kásim, it reinstated Mír J'afar—as their slave.

Mír Kásim, however, had not wholly renounced all hope of recovering his position. Presenting himself to the Emperor, Sháh A'lam, and to the Núwáb-Vazír, Shujá'u'd daulah, at Alláhábád, he entered into an agreement with those two high authorities, in virtue of which they, in consideration of his reducing with his troops the revolted Rájá of Bundelkhand, bound themselves to aid him with all their forces against the English. Mír Kásim easily overran Bundelkhand. The Emperor and the Núwáb-Vazír then kept their word. The united forces of the three contracting parties crossed the Ganges and advanced towards Patná. They arrived within sight of that city on the 23rd April. But an English army, commanded by Major Carnac, was occupying a strongly entrenched position in front of it. For more than a week the allies reconnoitred this position. On the 3rd May they attacked it. They were successful at one point, but the misconduct of the troops on another part of the field neutralised that success, and they fell back on Baksar. Here, on the 23rd of October following,

they were attacked and completely defeated by an English force under Major, afterwards Sir Hector, Munro. The war was prolonged till August 1765, and was then terminated by a treaty which virtually advanced the English frontier as far as Alláhábád. Just three months before this treaty had been concluded Lord Clive had returned to Calcutta. To him, then, I propose now to return.

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# CHAPTER XV.

## Second Administration.—Internal.

Clive reached Calcutta on the 3rd May 1765. At Madras, where he touched on the 10th April, he received despatches giving him the latest intelligence of the events passing in Bengal. From these he learned that Mír Kásim had been expelled from Bengal, and his supporters had been subdued; that Mír J'afar was dead, and that the Emperor and the Núwáb-Vazír had implored the forbearance of the English. Clive availed himself of the days of leisure assured to him by the voyage between the roadstead of Madras and the Huglí to consider the terms upon which to insist when concluding the treaty then clearly looming in the future.

Accompanying the new Governor and Commander-in-Chief were two gentlemen, Mr. Sykes and Mr. Sumner—two of the members* of a select committee of which he was the ruling spirit, and which was

* The other members were General Carnac and Mr. Verelst.

to supersede in India the authority of the President and Council—and several officers required to fill up vacancies in the military establishment, a plan for the remodelling of which had, prior to his departure from England, received the general approval of the Court of Directors. To carry out this scheme he directed his immediate attention. Three days after his arrival he appointed Brigadier-General Carnac to be colonel of infantry and commander-in-chief of the local forces. He directed that, as soon as circumstances would permit, the European infantry should be divided into three battalions; that Lieutenant-Colonels Smith and Barker, who had accompanied him from England, should be colonels of the two remaining regiments of infantry; that the three lieutenant-colonelcies should be given to Sir R. Fletcher, Major Peach, and Major Chapman; that two out of the three vacant majorities should be conferred upon Major Champion and Major Stibbert —the third to be left open for the present; that Major Jennings should be confirmed in command of the artillery.

But it was the remodelling of the civil, rather than of the military, service, which claimed the earnest attention of Lord Clive almost from the very hour of his return. The very day of his landing he wrote to General Carnac to tell him how he had been impressed by the extent to which the English name had sunk in Calcutta; how the Members of Council had taken immense sums as gratifications, and were so shameless as to own it publicly. In the same letter

he declared in the most solemn manner that he had come out with a mind superior to all corruption, and that he was determined to destroy the great and growing evil or perish in the attempt.

An occasion was at hand which demanded the putting in practice of this resolve.

Four months before Lord Clive's return, Mír J'afar, harassed by unceasing demands for money on the part of the Calcutta Council, and beset by difficulties which, even if he had had the spirit and energy, he had not the means, to overcome, had sunk into an unhonoured grave. The compact made with the English by this unhappy man before Plassey had brought him only shame and trouble; the compact made with the same nation on the eve of the campaign against Mír Kásim had covered himself and his office with ruin and disgrace. The Súbahdár of Bengal, Bihár and Orísá had, before the alliance with the foreigner, been one of the most powerful supports of the Mughul Empire. Alliance with the English had, in seven years, made the same high official, politically, an abject thing at which to point the finger, commercially "a banker for the Company's servants, who could draw upon him as often and to as great an amount as they pleased."*

But Mír J'afar was dead; it was necessary, politically, for the sake of appearances, personally and commercially for the sake of those who wished to dip their hands still deeper into the large bank of state

* Mr. Scrafton's letters.

revenues, that he should have a successor. There were two candidates for the office, one a son of Míran, and therefore grandson of the late Núwáb; the other Nujmu'd daulah, eldest surviving, but illegitimate, son of the deceased Mír J'afar.

The selection rested actually with the members of the Calcutta Council. These consisted of Mr. Spencer, who had, the preceding year, succeeded Mr. Vansittart in the presidential chair, Messrs. Johnstone, Senior, Middleton, Leycester, Playdell, Burdett, and Gray. But one thought pervaded the minds of these gentlemen, and that thought was how to make the best bargain—for themselves—from the transaction. Their predecessors in the offices they held had profited largely by the substitution of Mír J'afar for Siráju'd daulah, of Mír Kásim for Mír J'afar, again of Mír J'afar for Mír Kásim. It was unreasonable, then, to expect that they should forego the opportunity of making an equal profit by the selection of a successor to Mír J'afar.

Of the two candidates, one, the grandson of the deceased, was only six years old; the other, the son, was eighteen. As Mr. Mill finely points out, the one was of an age to give presents; the other was a minor, whose revenues would have to be accounted for.

There can be little doubt but that this consideration decided the choice of the Calcutta Council. They, resolved, after due consideration, to negotiate with the son, Nujmu'd daulah. They came to this decision in the face of an offer made them by the Emperor to confer the Súbahdárí of the three provinces upon the

Company, in other words, to supersede the whole family of Mír J'afar in its favour. Notwithstanding the fact that this arrangement would have been very beneficial alike to the Company—as it proved when carried out subsequently—and to the natives, for they would have been plundered by one master instead of by two, it would not have profited the private interests of the members of Council. It was therefore rejected, and negotiations were entered into with Nujmu'd daulah.

The negotiations with Mír J'afar in 1757 had been carried on by means of a Bengáli, Amíchand, who had been cheated out of his reward. The art of negotiating corrupt bargains had in the interval made considerable progress, and in 1765 Englishmen were proved adepts at it. On the occasion of which I am writing Mr. Gideon Johnstone, brother of one of the members of Council, conducted the more or less delicate bargain. The agent on the other side was Muhammad Ríza Khán, a Muhammadan gentlemen, very clever and very unscrupulous. These two negotiators, each worthy of the other, arranged that the sum to be paid by Nujmu'd daulah for the empty right to be called Súbahdár should be twenty lakhs of rupees; that of this sum Mr. Spencer should receive 200,000 rupees; Mr. Johnstone 237,000; Messrs. Playdell, Burdett, and Gray, 100,000 each; Mr. Senior, 172,500; Mr. Middleton, 122,500; Mr. Leycester, 112,500; and Mr. Gideon Johnstone, 50,000. The balance, consisting of over ten lakhs, was to be distributed in a more secret manner. For this

consideration* Mr. Gideon Johnstone arranged not only that Nujmu'd daulah should be nominated Súbahdár of the three provinces, but that Muhammad Ríza should be Náib Súbah, or deputy Núwáb, and, as such, should exercise all authority. On the 25th February the bargain was completed, and Nujmu'd daulah took his seat on his viceregal throne.

This transaction, no less than the vaunting manner in which the principal actors in it spoke of it, roused all the ire of Clive. In condemning their conduct, as he did, in unmeasured terms, he had right and power on his side. Just thirteen days before the death of Mír J'afar the Calcutta Council had received from the India Office a despatch, directing the immediate execution of a new covenant between the Company and its servants forbidding the latter to accept for themselves thenceforth any presents from the natives.† For the moment the Bengal Govern-

* It deserves to be recorded that at the time that this shameless bargain was made the Company's treasury was empty, and there were no means of replenishing it. The sums necessary for carrying on the public business were lent to the Treasury by the Company's servants at eight per cent. Well might the India Office complain that their servants had interests distinct from those of their masters!

† The order ran to the effect that new covenants, dated May 1764, should be executed by all the servants of the Company, civil and military, binding them to pay to the Company the amount of all presents and gratuities in whatever shape, received from the natives, in case the amount should exceed four thousand rupees, and not to accept any present or gratuity, if amounting even to one thousand rupees, without the consent of the President in Council. This order reached Calcutta early in January 1765;

ment treated the order with silent contempt. In direct violation of its provisions the members of Council received the large sums I have mentioned from Nujmu'd daulah, and far from attempting to conceal the transaction, they openly boasted of it in the presence of the new Governor. They hoped to bear him down, as they and their predecessors had borne down Vansittart, by the weight of their majority.

But Clive was a different man from Vansittart. When, on the very day of his arrival, at a meeting summoned by him, the members of Council began the tactics which had prevailed with his predecessor, one questioning the extent and meaning of the powers conferred upon his committee, another proposing measures which would neutralise their force, Clive plainly let them know that he was resolved to be master. On the 7th May, without waiting for General Carnac and Mr. Verelst, he declared the Select Committee formed; assumed the whole powers of the government, civil and military; and taking an oath of secrecy himself, caused the same to be administered to his colleagues and the secretaries.

The first task to which the Committee bent themselves, was to investigate the transactions relative to the accession of Nujmu'd daulah. Driven into a corner, the inculpated members of Council boldly

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and though the members of the Services did not at once sign the covenants, the orders respecting them were morally not the less binding upon them.

retorted that they had only followed the example of Clive himself with respect to Mír J'afar. To this allegation Clive had a ready, and, as he had persuaded himself, a complete answer. In those days the accepting of presents from native princes was lawful, in these it was forbidden. Further, he went on to argue, at the time of the conquest of Bengal the wealth of the province was boundless, whereas experience had shown, and none knew better than the members of Council, that it had been greatly overrated, and that the burdens imposed by the English upon the Núwáb had contributed greatly to his ruin. So far the reasoning was plausible. But when Clive went on to assert that the overthrow of Siráju'd daulah and the elevation of Mír J'afar had been the work of the people of Bengal, the English acting merely a subordinate part as auxiliaries, he chose to forget the negotiations with Amíchand, the conspiracy with the chiefs of the army, the sums which were paid him, not by the people, but by ambitious chiefs working for their own interest; that the immediate result had been enormously to increase the burdens pressing on the people. Arguing from the point of view that his own policy, right in itself, had been exaggerated and disfigured by his successors, he proceeded to condemn the subsequent removal of Mír J'afar, and the substitution of Mír Kásim—acts which he attributed only to the love of personal gain on the part of the Council. As strongly, too, did he express his disapproval of the policy which had forced Mír Kásim into rebellion. But the

act which of all others he most condemned was that immediately under his review. In 1765, he urged, there was no crisis; there was no excuse for the intervention of the English, and his own early arrival was certain. He charged the members of Council, the representatives of the Company, with having set up the Súbahdárí for sale and put the price of it into their pockets. He charged them further with having hurried forward the transaction with precipitation lest the arrival of his Committee should interrupt the transaction.

The receivers of the bribes could not deny these charges. They made no attempt even to refute them. During the brief remainder of their stay in Bengal they combated Clive with a vigour, an audacity, and a resolution worthy of a better cause; and when, finally, he drove them from their seats in the manner presently to be related, they returned to England, to excite there against him a clamour which was to embitter the last days of his life.

One of the earliest acts upon which Clive insisted was that the new covenants should be signed. His order was obeyed, not, however, without a murmur. It was the murmur which preluded the storm. Resolved to push his reforms to the utmost—"to cleanse the Augean stable"—as he put it when defending himself at a later period, Clive at the same time directed an investigation into the right claimed by the servants of the Company to trade on their own account. The war with Mír Kásim had been brought about solely by the selfish desire of the

Company's servants to retain in their own hands, for their own private interests, the monopoly of a trade, in the enormous profits arising from which they did not allow the Company, of which they were the sworn servants, to share. This trade was confined to articles the products of the country, principally to salt, betel-nuts, and tobacco, the consumption of which was universal. That the demand for these articles was enormous may be concluded from the fact that salt in India is largely consumed in every household; that the very moderate duty imposed upon betel-nuts and tobacco had, up to 1758, constituted one of the main sources of revenue to the Núwábs of the three provinces. The results of the monopoly for the sale of these products acquired by the Company's servants had resulted in the ruin of the native merchants, the acquisition for themselves of princely fortunes, the neglect of the interests of their masters. These licensed plunderers had not hesitated to imperil the possession of Bengal by embarking in a war with Mír Kásim to uphold this private monopoly. They were not the men likely to relinquish their hold upon it when their own nominee reigned in the place of the expelled Mír Kásim.

It was with such men, the servants of the Company from the highest to the lowest, plunderers alike of the native merchants and of the public revenues, that Clive and his Committee had to deal. He was very much hampered by the fact that private trade had been authorised by the Court of Directors, and that it was from the profits of the private trade that

they had always proposed to compensate their servants for the insignificance of their salaries. A member of Council received in those days only three hundred pounds a year. The Court, then, was the real cause of the evil which had arisen. It constitutes but a poor defence of the Directors to say that they never imagined that the evil would assume the gigantic proportions it had attained in 1762–65. They had granted a permission of which their servants had taken undue advantage. Nor were they prepared, in 1765, to have recourse to the one remedial measure which was afterwards adopted —a large increase of salaries accompanied by an absolute prohibition of private trade. Clive himself had strongly urged such a measure. It did not fit in, however, with the ideas of the day. The Court of Directors had not realised the fact that the achievements of Clive had made them the inevitable successors of the Mughuls. Their imaginations were still confined by the traditions of the counting-house. They would not increase the salaries, at the same time they would not interfere with the private trade, of their servants.

It was this action which hampered Clive; which prevented him from reforming radically a procedure which was fast ruining the country. He could not prohibit private trade to civil servants of the higher grades, for, under the parsimonious rules of the India Office, without private trade they could not live. But he did all that was possible under the circumstances. In concert with his colleagues of the Select Committee

he issued an order abrogating the power—the abuse of which it will be recollected had roused the anger of Mír Kásim—exercised up to that time by the Company's servants generally, to grant passes for the transport of merchandise; and restricted it to certain authorities, named and defined. Another abuse of which Mír Kásim had largely complained was the facility which the unrestricted employment of passes by the Company's servants had given to the employment of combined force and fraud. Under the operation of the rule, natives of Calcutta and the vicinity had dressed their servants as sipáhís and sent them with forged passes, often without passes, to force their way beyond the custom line of the Núwáb's territories. Whilst putting an end to this abuse Clive imposed upon the system of private trade restrictions which minimised as much as possible its evils. He did, in fact, more in that direction than Mír Kásim had asked of Vansittart's government. In a general way it may be said that he brought the management of public and private trade in Bengal under the control of the Government.

These reforms had the effect of greatly retrenching the profits which the civil servants of the Company had enjoyed. The best method of compensating them would have been to increase their salaries. But as the Court of Directors would not allow Clive to alter the regulations upon this subject, he was compelled to devise other schemes to accomplish the same result. The plan which he finally adopted had the merit of being comparatively fair to all parties. Hitherto the

trade in salt had been conducted in a manner which, whilst it produced enormous gains to a few traders, pressed very hardly on the natives. Clive, whilst still retaining the monopoly, placed the trade on a fixed basis—a basis which, whilst it would ensure to the native population a certain supply at a rate not too extravagant, should secure for the servants of the Company fixed incomes on a graduated scale. He provided that thenceforth the trade in salt should be conducted on the principle of a joint-stock company composed of all the higher officials of the Government, civil and military. "The capital," to use his own words, "is thirty-two lakhs of rupees, upon which the most moderate may expect to make fifty per cent. clear of all charges; others seventy-five per cent.; and the most sanguine one hundred per cent." To the members of the Company the fifty-six shares, into which the capital was divided, were allotted in rateable proportion. Thus, to the first class thirty-five shares were reserved, divided as follows: to the Governor, five shares; to the second in Council and to the Commander-in-Chief, each three shares; the other ten members of Council and colonels of brigade, two shares each. To the second class twelve shares were reserved, to be divided amongst one chaplain, fourteen senior merchants, and three lieutenant-colonels, each receiving two-thirds of a share; to the third class nine shares were given to be divided amongst thirteen factors, four majors, six first surgeons, one secretary to Council, one sub-accountant, one Persian translator, and one export-warehouse

keeper, allowing each one-third of a share. Clive calculated that at the lowest rate a Councillor would receive seven thousand pounds per annum.

It was by no means a perfect scheme. It amounted to the imposition of a tax of thirty-five per cent. on the raw material. But it was a vast improvement on the regulations regarding the sale of salt which had preceded it. Whilst it had the effect of reducing the price of that article ten to fifteen per cent. below the average of the twenty years immediately preceding, it secured to the Company's servants of the higher grade handsome incomes, at the same time that it diverted their attention from a demoralising traffic. Thenceforth "they were sleeping partners of a sure and profitable concern, the whole details of which, without any care on their part, were managed by a committee devoted to business."*

A third point which Clive brought before the consideration of the Select Committee was the constitution of the Calcutta Council. According to the orders then in existence, it was composed of a president and sixteen members. The fact of being a member of

* Malcolm's *Memoirs of Lord Clive*, vol. iii. p. 102. The Court of Directors, having always before them the war with Mír Kásim, caused mainly by the imposition of duties on raw products, disapproved of this arrangement. They directed that the trade in salt should be made free. The despatch containing these instructions reached Clive as his second administration was drawing to a close. Unable to act directly counter to them, he, in Select Committee, abolished the salt company or society from a prospective date—the 1st September 1767. The Committee further requested the Court of Directors to review their decision.

Council did not preclude a man from accepting an agency elsewhere. There resulted from this, that whilst members of Council were scattered over the provinces, the real work of the Government was carried on by seven or eight, sometimes by fewer, gentlemen. The evil produced was greater than would appear at the first glance. The charge of an agency was extremely lucrative in the opportunities it gave for private trade. An agent, who was also a member of Council, and who could always not only support his own measures by a vote, but could count upon the votes of his colleagues in that body, enjoyed practical immunity from inquiry. The remedy suggested by Clive went to put a stop to this accumulation of offices; to rule that a member of Council should be a member of Council, and nothing more; an agent an agent, and nothing more; and that the number of Councillors should be reduced to twelve, the only exception to be in the case of the Commander-in-Chief, who would often be compelled to proceed with the army in the field. It was natural that this reform, bearing on its face though it did the stamp of common-sense, should meet with opposition from without. That which Clive had not anticipated was that it should encounter resistance in the body of the Select Committee. In spite, however, of this opposition, he carried it through.

The composition of the Select Committee has been already noted. Of its members, General Carnac was with the army; Mr. Sykes was with the Núwáb at Murshidábád; Mr. Verelst had been nominated super-

visor of Bardhwán and Mednípúr (Midnapore); Mr. Sumner alone remained with Lord Clive.

Mr. Sumner held in his hands the reversion of the Government of Bengal. He had been selected as successor to Clive whenever Clive should choose to leave India. For such a post he was in every way unfitted. Not only was he wanting in energy and decision, but he showed on many important occasions a sympathy with the corrupt party, which could only be attributed to the consideration that his conduct in previous years, when he had been agent in Bardhwán, could not bear scrutiny.

Neither in the efforts which he made to reform the constitution of the Bengal Council, nor in the crusade which he undertook against abuses, did Clive receive any support from Mr. Sumner. These abuses had, however, "rendered the English name odious." The Company's servants had proceeded "even to extortion in those cases where simple corruption could not keep pace with their rapacity. Examples of this sort, set by emperors, could not fail of being followed, in a proportionable degree, by inferiors. The evil was contagious, and spread among the civil and military, down to the writer, the ensign, and the free merchant."*

As an example of the extortion, the corruption and the rapacity to which Clive alluded, I will cite the case of Bardhwán, as stated, not by Clive, but by the

* Lord Clive to the Court of Directors, dated 30th September 1765.

Court of Directors, in a despatch dated 17th May, 1766, a despatch in which the wise and just and reforming conduct of the Select Committee is contrasted with that of the Calcutta Council. In the district of Bardhwán, then, it was proved that the Resident and his council had accepted from the Rájá an annual stipend of eighty thousand rupees in addition to the salaries they received from the Company. But this was not all. It was shown that they had shared with the Rájá all the land revenues he had collected in excess of the amount he had stipulated to pay to the Company. The enormity of this breach of trust will be recognised if the reader bear in mind that, with the exception of a certain fixed amount for the support of the Rájá, the whole revenues of the district belonged by treaty to the Company. But as it had been agreed that under no circumstances were those revenues to fall below a certain minimum amount, the Resident and the Rájá combined to arrange that that minimum amount should be paid, and that they should share the balance. Can we wonder that the Court of Directors should denounce this action as one "directly undermining the whole fabric; for whilst the Company were sinking under the burden of war, our servants were enriching themselves from those very funds that ought to have supported the war!"

These remarks were applicable not to Bardhwán alone, but to every district in the three provinces held by the English. The case was clearly and tersely put by the Court when they described those

provinces, at the time of Lord Clive's arrival, as "a súbah disarmed, with a revenue of almost two millions sterling, at the mercy of our servants, who had adopted an unheard of ruinous principle, of an interest distinct from the Company. This principle showed itself in laying their hands upon everything they did not deem the Company's property."

The evil being deep-rooted and wide-spread, Clive deemed it advisable, with the view to come to a complete understanding with the native authorities, and to invoke their assistance in carrying out the reforming measures which he contemplated, to invite to Calcutta the Núwáb Nujmu'd daulah; his minister, Muhammad Ríza Khán; his old ally in the negotiations before Plassey, Rájá Dúlab Rám; and the most influential bankers at Murshidábád. The disclosures which these made to him in the conferences which followed their arrival, more than confirmed the worst fears he had entertained regarding the all but universal corruption of the public service. He ascertained that, in addition to the sums which Muhammad Ríza had paid to the members of Council on behalf of the Núwáb for his accession to the viceregal seat, he had distributed to influential servants of the Company upwards of ten lakhs* for the avowed purpose of maintaining him on that seat, and that in this plunder many of the members of Council had

* The total sum mentioned by the Núwáb was twenty lakhs: of this nearly ten were paid on his accession, and the balance subsequently.

participated. This was the charge which brought matters to a climax, and which resulted in the suspension of Mr. Spencer, Mr. Johnstone, and Mr. Leycester, and in the forced retirement of Messrs. Burdett, Gray, and Playdell, and other senior members. Clive filled up the vacancies thus caused, sufficient to form the Council of twelve members, by indenting on Madras for servants of the Company not committed to the corrupt practices of Bengal.

This measure, whilst it strengthened his hands, greatly increased his unpopularity amongst the civil servants of Bengal. Neither their clamour nor their hatred interfered, however, with the steady progress of the measures which Clive gradually, but steadily, introduced. On some of the less hardened evil-doers the effect of the inquiry, which preceded the introduction of reform, was fatal. The chief agent at Patná, Mr. Billars, accused of malversation, committed suicide. Others, less compromised, did not hesitate to express their feelings in a very unbecoming manner.

They formed amongst themselves an association of which the following were some of the main articles: —That all visits to the Governor were forbidden; that no invitations from him and the members of the Select Committee should be accepted; that the gentlemen coming from Madras should be treated with neglect and contempt; that every member of the Bengal service who should in any way deviate from this programme should be denounced and avoided.

An opportunity came later, before the departure of

the great reformer, for them to display still more violently the pent-up anger which burned within them. I allude to the occasion given by the conspiracy of the officers, dealt with in their turn. Of this the civilians eagerly availed themselves.

Of the young Núwáb who had purchased his inheritance for twenty lakhs of rupees, Clive formed but a poor opinion. "The more I see of the Núwáb," he wrote to General Carnac, "the more I am convinced of his incapacity for business; whether it proceeds from want of natural abilities, or want of education, time will discover; certain it is, the most difficult task we have is to act in such a manner as not to put too great a restraint upon the Núwáb's inclinations, and yet, at the same time, influence him to do what is for his own honour and the good of the Company."

With the deputy Núwáb, Muhammad Ríza Khán, and the other surroundings of the Núwáb, Clive was even less favourably impressed. In another letter, addressed to the same officer, he wrote:—"I am as fully averse to Ríza Khán's remaining in the great post of Náib Súbah. His being a Musulmán, acute and clever, are reasons of themselves, if there were no others, against trusting that man with too much power; and yet the young man must have men about him capable of directing and governing him; for, besides his youth, he is really very simple, and always receives his impressions from those last about him. It is really shocking to see what a set of miserable and mean wretches Nandkumár has

placed about him, men that the other day were horsekeepers."

The Nandkumár here referred to is the same Nandkumár who commanded for Siráju'd daulah at Huglí when Clive attacked Chandranagar, and who had been bribed by Amíchand into neutrality. Subsequently imprisoned for corruption, then released on the intercession of Mír J'afar, he came, during the second administration of that Núwáb, to be the keeper of his conscience and his purse. On Mír J'afar's death he had been set aside in favour of Ríza Sáhib, and been directly charged with the worst crimes that could characterise an administrator. Nevertheless, a certain clique, at the head of which was General Carnac, was anxious that he should replace Ríza Sáhib. Clive refused to employ him, and endeavoured to solve the difficulty by associating with Ríza Sáhib, in the office of Náib Súbah, Rájá Dúlab Rám and the eminent and wealthy banker, Jagget Sét. Ríza Sáhib still, however, continued all-powerful.

The reforms to which Clive devoted his attention were not carried out all at once. The basis of them was laid, however, during the first twelve months which followed his return. The strain, the mental labour, had been enormous. Whilst his only colleague on the spot was always showing an inclination to give way, whilst the moment affairs had required Clive to absent himself temporarily from Calcutta, he had yielded absolutely to the pressure of the corrupt clique, Clive had remained firm and determined. The task had been almost beyond his

strength. He had found, to use his own language, "extortion and corruption practised openly and at noonday; the three kingdoms of Bengal, Bihár, and Orísá, whose revenues amounted to four millions sterling per annum, put to sale; and the profits divided among the civil and military; the Company's interests most scandalously sacrificed; * " and he had laid the foundation of a reformation as thorough as the powers with which he had been entrusted would allow. Completely thorough he could not make it, because the Court of Directors refused to sanction the one measure, the grant of liberal salaries to their servants, which would have enabled him to forbid private trading. He had to steer towards the same end by a circuitous route. His reforms, therefore, were necessarily and avowedly imperfect. But that he checked a great evil, that he infused a healthier tone into the public service, that he did something towards rehabilitating the British name, sunk at the time in the mire, will, I think, be admitted. Indeed, looking at the obstacles he encountered both above him, on either side of him, and below him, there are few, I believe, who will not be ready to concur in the verdict of Sir John Malcolm, set forth in the eloquent language which follows: "It may be questioned," he writes,† "whether any of Clive's many and great achievements called forth more of that active energy and calm firmness for which he was distinguished than was

* Letter to Sir Matthew Featherstonhaugh, dated 30th September 1765.

† *Life of Robert, Lord Clive*, vol. ii. p. 380.

evinced in effecting the reform of the Civil Service of Bengal."

There is certainly no position more trying than that of the man who, *tenax propositi*, endeavours to root out abuses based upon class interests. Clive had, in the course of his career, been exposed to great dangers; the surprise at Samiaveram, the night at Kávéripák, the half-hour in the grove before Plassey, had exercised every faculty of his soul. On his action on those trying occasions had depended empire, fame, life, and all that makes life valuable. But what were those trying periods, acute in their short-lived excitement as they were, to the prolonged agony of the contest with the vested interests of Bengal, a contest in which he stood alone against men who had gained wealth, who possessed vast influence at the India Office, which he knew would be used against him on his return, a contest which conciliated no one, which promised no substantial rewards, which sowed the seeds of life-long enmities? The man must have possessed a will of iron who, with such a prospect before him, sustained, not by high principle, not by the feeling that he himself, under similar circumstances, had resisted temptation, but by the dogged resolution, often expressed, to extirpate an evil which, if allowed to continue, would undermine his own work, should have dared to persevere!

# CHAPTER XVI.

## Second Administration.—Political.

Clive set out on the 25th June to join the army. The transactions which awaited him were of a most important nature. He had to settle with the Emperor and the Núwáb-Vazír of Awadh (Oudh) the new frontier of the territories which had recently been brought in subjection to the English.

When Clive in the preceding April had learned at Madras of the death of Mir J'afar and the success of the British arms on the frontier, he had devised in his own mind a scheme for the welding of the three provinces and of the new territory to be acquired into one compact whole, to be governed by the English under the direct authority of the Emperor of Dihlí. He would have placed in the viceregal seat of Murshidábád the son of Míran, then a child six years of age; have conferred upon him the nominal title; he would have allowed his ministers to administer the country, and to collect its revenues. But for his own countrymen he would have assumed the supreme

control. They would receive the revenues and undertake the defence of the three provinces against invasion and insurrection: they would make war and conclude peace. All this, however, they would do in the name of the Núwáb and under the authority of the Emperor.

The indecent haste with which, before he could arrive, the Calcutta Council had sold the vacated seat of Nujmu'd daulah, had to a certain extent frustrated this plan. Clive acknowledged the new Núwáb. He did not, however, abandon his idea; and it was with the view of carrying out, even of developing it, that he was anxious to hasten to the front to arrange with the prince who was titular Emperor of Hindústán and King of Dihlí, first regarding the new territories to be acquired, secondly regarding the future status of the three provinces.

The Emperor and the Núwáb were at Alláhábád, awaiting there the terms which it should please Clive to impose. They might almost be called houseless wanderers; Dihlí was in the hands of the Afgháns, Awadh (Oudh) was prostrate before the English. The King and the Núwáb were alike reckless with respect to their own territories; they had one idea and one hope—that was that they might be able to induce Clive to march northwards to recover the capital of the Mughal Empire. They believed they had some reason for this hope, for when, after their disaster at Baksar, and before the arrival of Clive, they had flashed it before the Calcutta Council, Mr. Spencer had not rejected it.

Clive left Calcutta, as I have stated, on the 25th June, and proceeded direct to Murshidábád. There, after several interviews with the Núwáb and his ministers, he arranged the scheme which he had predetermined to introduce when the death of Mír J'afar should afford him the opportunity. Baffled for the moment by the premature action of the Calcutta Council, he felt that the time had arrived when he might recur to it with advantage. He had found the young Núwáb uneducated and sensual, his minister a clever and reckless adventurer; and, although he had attempted to check the misrule of the latter by combining with him two men on whom he believed he could rely, the experiment did not seem to promise well. In an association of three men the stronger character will always assert itself. He resolved, then, with the consent of the Núwáb, which virtually was assured beforehand, to reintroduce, with certain improvements, into the three provinces the system which had prevailed in them in the time of the Emperor Aurangzíb, and which, therefore, had the merit of ancient usage to recommend it.* The principle of this system provided that for the Government of the three provinces there should be, first, a Núwáb-Názim, responsible for their defence and for the maintenance of the public peace, for the administration of justice, and for the enforcing of obedience to the law; secondly, a Díwán, or chief financial minister,

* *Early Records of British India*, by J. Talboys Wheeler, p. 334, note.

appointed by the Emperor and empowered to receive the yearly revenues of the provinces, responsible for all disbursements, and for the payment of the surplus, after a due provision for the requirements of the local court, to the imperial treasury. This system Clive was resolved to apply to the existing state of affairs. He would reduce Nujmu'd daulah to the status of Núwáb-Názim; the Company should occupy the position of Díwán. Subsequently, should his negotiations with the Emperor and the Núwáb-Vazír afford him the opportunity, he resolved further to transfer from the Núwáb-Názim to the Company the responsibility for the maintenance of the public peace, for the administration of justice, and for the enforcing of obedience to the law. In fact he would render the Company all-powerful, the Núwáb-Názim a cypher.

The negotiations with the Núwáb in July 1765 presented no difficulty whatever. That unhappy youth consented—on the representations made to him by Clive,* of the great expense the English would incur in maintaining an army large enough to support him in his government, of the large sums due for restitution, and the navy, together with that accruing from the annual tribute which he would be under the necessity of paying to the King (of Dihlí)—to alienate for those purposes all the revenues of the country, fifty lakhs of rupees only excepted. Out of this sum the whole expenses of the Núwáb's court, of every

* Letter from Clive to Select Committee, dated 11th July 1765.

nature and denomination, were to be defrayed.* The amount was, at a subsequent interview, increased to fifty-three lakhs. As the revenues of the country were estimated at between three and four millions, and the yearly payments to the Núwáb amounted to fifty-three lakhs, and the annual tribute to the Emperor to twenty-six lakhs, representing a total considerably short of a million, the arrangement was certainly not disadvantageous to the Company.

As soon as he had settled this preliminary Clive proceeded *viâ* Patná to Banáras, and arrived there on the 1st August. Thither General Carnac, commanding the forces, and Shujáu'd daulah, Núwáb-Vazír of Awadh (Oudh), had preceded him. I shall proceed at once to record the negotiations which ensued between the two contracting parties.

The idea which ruled in the mind of Clive was, first, the acquisition of a safe boundary for the Company's possessions, and the virtual transfer to the Company of all the territory within that boundary. This would imply confirmation of the arrangements made at Murshidábád. The conferences were opened with this view at Banáras, but, after some discussions, it was decided, for the sake of convenience, and of the presence at Alláhábád of the Emperor, to bring them

* The Núwáb, wrote Clive, "received the proposal of having a sum of money for himself and household at his will with infinite pleasure, and the only remark he made upon leaving me was, 'Thank God, I shall now have as many dancing girls as I please.'"

to a conclusion at that place. Thither, therefore, Clive, the Núwáb-Vazír, and Carnac proceeded.

The conditions which Clive formulated were such as, with one exception, the Emperor and the Núwáb-Vazír were prepared to accept. The exception proves how thoroughly the latter had realised the danger of allowing the pushing islanders one inch of ground within his own territories. Whilst Shujáu'd daulah declared his readiness to cede to the English the fortress of Chunar, and to the Emperor the provinces of Karrah and Alláhábád, to be held for him, if he should require it, by the English; whilst he agreed to pay fifty lakhs of rupees for the expenses of the war just concluded; engaged never to employ or afford protection to Mír Kásim and Samrú; promised to allow the Company to trade free throughout his dominions,—he steadily refused to grant its servants permission to establish a single factory within his borders. He drew the line at trade, but at a trade to be conducted from a base outside of his dominions. He did not conceal his reasons. He pointed to Bengal and drew the inevitable conclusion. "To that province," he said in so many words, "you came to trade, and only to trade; within it you were allowed to establish factories; for a time all went well; but gradually disputes arose which embroiled you with the native ruler. Where is the native ruler now, and where are you? I decline to submit my dominions to the same chances. Collisions will certainly arise, possibly from the fault of myself or my successors, but arrive they will, and then——" This

was a reasoning which Clive, of all men, could not answer. He waived the question of factories.

In addition to the stipulations above noted, there were others, mutually agreed upon, to the effect that the Zamíndár, subsequently known as the Rájá, of Banáras, who during the war had submitted to the English and been taken under their protection, should retain his districts, subordinate to the Núwáb-Vazír, on the terms on which he had held them before the war; that a treaty of mutual support, in case of attack, should be made between the English, the Núwáb-Vazír, and the Súbahdár of Bengal, Bihár and Orísá; and that, in the event of the troops of the Company being required by the Núwáb-Vazír for the defence of his country, he should bear all the expenses attendant on their employment.

It may be proper to anticipate the arrangements which were the consequence of this treaty, by stating here that, in the month of October following, Lord Clive, accompanied by General Carnac, proceeded to Chaprá, to meet there in congress the Núwáb-Vazír of Awadh (Oudh), the Emperor's ambassador, and the agents from the Ját chiefs of Ágra, and the Rohílah chiefs of Rohílkhand. The object of the congress, at which agents from the Maráthá chief of Birár were also present, was to form a league against the aggressions of the Maráthá people. In the course of the discussions which followed Lord Clive discovered that the Maráthá movement, which, as will presently be related, caused him considerable uneasiness at a formidable crisis of domestic adminis-

tration, had been caused by the urgent solicitation of his own ally, the Emperor Sháh Álam! Lord Clive, then, in complete understanding with the Núwáb-Vazír, arranged that the British troops should be recalled from Karrah and Alláhábád and stationed at Dáúdnagar and Sahasrám (Sasseram), where, supported by a brigade at Bánkípúr, they would cover the province of Bihár. In consequence of renewed movements on the part of the Maráthás this arrangement was modified in the following November. The third brigade was moved forward to occupy Alláhábád and protect the province of Karrah; and whilst a strong detachment of the second brigade, which had its head-quarters at Bánkípúr, was sent to garrison Chunar, two battalions of it were detailed for Banáras, and one for Lakhnao. This was the final arrangement made by Lord Clive for the protection of his new frontier.

To return. The treaty with the Emperor completely fulfilled the long-nursed views of Clive. In return for the doubtful cession of two provinces to be guarded by the English, the Emperor Sháh Álam granted firmáns, confirming the Company in all the possessions held by it in his territories, and bestowing upon it the Díwání, or total revenue proceeds, of the provinces of Bengal, Bihár, and Orísá, "as a free gift, without the association of any other person." From those revenue proceeds was to be deducted only the customary annual contribution to the Emperor, of twenty-six lakhs, always paid by the ruler of the three provinces. The Company further bound itself

to provide for the expenses incurred by the Nizámat keeping up an army for the defence of the three provinces.* Practically, the Company simply engaged to keep up an army for that purpose.

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* Writing to the Court of Directors in the name of the Select Committee, Clive thus defended his policy (30th September 1765): "The perpetual struggles for superiority between the Núwábs and your agents, together with the recent proofs before us of notorious and avowed corruption, have rendered us unanimously of opinion, after the most mature deliberation, that no other method can be suggested of laying the axe to the root of all those evils, than that of obtaining the Díwáni of Bengal, Bihár, and Orísá, for the Company. By establishing the power of the Great Mughal, we have likewise established his rights; and His Majesty, from principles of gratitude, of equity, and of policy, has thought proper to bestow this important employment on the Company, the nature of which is, the collecting all the revenues, and after defraying the expenses of the army, and allowing a sufficient fund for the support of the Nizámat, to remit the remainder to Dihlí, or wherever the King shall reside or direct. But as the King has been graciously pleased to bestow on the Company, for ever, such surplus as shall arise from the revenues, upon certain stipulations and agreements expressed in the Sanad, we have settled with the Núwáb, with his own free will and consent, that the sum of fifty-three lakhs shall be annually paid to him, for the support of his dignity and all contingent expenses, exclusive of the charge of maintaining an army, which is to be defrayed out of the revenues ceded to the Company, by this royal grant of the Díwáni; and, indeed, the Núwáb has abundant reason to be well satisfied with the conditions of this agreement, whereby a fund is secured to him, without trouble or danger, adequate to all the purposes of such grandeur and happiness as a man of his sentiments has any conception of enjoying; more would serve only to disturb his quiet, endanger his government, and sap the foundation of that solid structure of power and wealth which, at length, is happily reared and completed by the Company, after a vast expense of blood and treasure.

"By this acquisition of the Díwání, your possessions and influ-

This, then, was the result of Plassey. This the retribution which had fallen upon the family of Mír

ence are rendered permanent and secure, since no future Núwáb will either have power or riches sufficient to attempt your overthrow, by means either of force or corruption. All revolutions must henceforward be at an end, as there will be no fund for secret services, for donations, or for restitutions. The Núwáb cannot answer the expectations of the venal and mercenary, nor will the Company comply with demands injurious to themselves, out of their own revenues. The experience of years has convinced us that a division of power is impossible without generating discontent and hazarding the whole: all must belong either to the Company or to the Núwáb. We leave you to judge which alternative is the most desirable, and the most expedient in the present circumstances of affairs. As to ourselves, we know of no other system we could adopt, that would less affect the Núwáb's dignity, and at the same time secure the Company against the fatal effects of future revolutions than this of the Díwání. The power is now lodged where it can only be lodged with safety to us, so that we may pronounce with some degree of confidence that the worst which will happen in future to the Company will proceed from temporary ravages only, which can never become so general as to prevent your revenues from yielding a sufficient fund to defray your civil and military charges, and furnish your investments.

"The more we reflect on the situation of your affairs, the stronger appear the reasons for accepting the Díwání of these provinces, by which alone we could establish a power sufficient to perpetuate the possessions we hold, and the influence we enjoy. While the Núwáb acted in quality of collector for the Mughal, the means of supporting our military establishment depended upon his pleasure. In the most critical situations, while we stood balancing on the extreme border of destruction, his stipulated payments were slow and deficient, his revenues withheld by disaffected Rájás and turbulent Zamíndárs, who despised the weakness of his Government; or they were squandered in profusion, and dissipated in corruption, the never-failing symptoms of a declining constitution and feeble administration. Hence we were frequently disappointed of those supplies, upon the punctual receipt of which depended the very existence of the Company in Bengal."

J'afar! But eight years after that battle, the provinces, to gain which for himself Mír J'afar had betrayed his master, were made over to his ally: the representative of his family had become a pensioner, without power, and, except within the four walls of his palace, without authority! Whatever impression of another character this event may produce, it cannot, at least, be denied that the family reaped an appropriate reward for treason. For Clive it was a triumph—a triumph he hastened to improve. From Alláhábád he hastened to Banáras to settle the affairs of the army—to be presently recorded; thence to Calcutta to add vigour to the carrying out of his civil reforms; and thence again, in April 1766, to Murshidábád, to be present at the annual revenue settlement known as the Puna, the first made since the new arrangements had been entered into. To this great meeting it was the custom for every landholder to come to make his agreement regarding the payment of the revenue for the coming year. It was conducted with great solemnity. The Núwáb-Názim, now so denominated, sat on the throne as titular ruler of the three provinces; on his right stood the English Governor, as representative of the Company, in the quality of Díwán of the Emperor.

On the occasion of this visit an unexpected announcement was made to the English governor. This was to the effect that, in his will, the late Núwáb had bequeathed him a legacy of five lakhs of rupees. Although the new covenants, by which the Company's servants had bound themselves to accept no presents

from the natives of India, had been executed subsequently to the date of this will, Lord Clive felt that, in the position he occupied, he could not, with regard to his own honour and to his position, accept the legacy for himself. He resolved, therefore, to constitute with it a fund for the relief of officers and men of the Company's army who might be disabled by wounds or by the climate. In a letter addressed to the Council (8th April 1766) he communicated this decision. The reply of the Council, dated the 14th of the same month, expressed an opinion that the acceptance of the legacy was in no way prohibited by the covenants, and a lively sense of the generous manner in which it was to be applied. The consequence was the institution of a fund, known as Lord Clive's Fund, which, for nearly a century, acted most beneficially for thousands of the Company's servants. It is a curious fact, however, that, on the transfer of the British possessions in India from the Company to the Crown at the close of 1858, the fund was claimed by the heirs of Lord Clive as having lapsed to them by the demise of the Company. The claim was held to be valid in law, and Mír J'afar's legacy was transferred to private hands.

The month following Clive's visit to Murshidábád, an event occurred which put to a certain test the new arrangements. On the 19th May the Núwáb-Názim, Nujmu'd daulah, after a short illness caused by intemperance in eating, died. An event of this nature would, under the old arrangements, have given rise to intrigues, to heart-burnings, to corrupt negotiations.

It must be fresh in the reader's recollection, how, in succession, Mír J'afar, Mír Kásim, then again Mír J'afar, and lastly how Nujmu'd daulah, had bought their sovereignty; how the Calcutta Council had put up the Súbahdárí of the three provinces to the highest bidder, and had sold it. But action of this sort had now become past history. Under the new arrangements it was absolutely indifferent to the Calcutta Council who might be the successor to the deceased Núwáb-Názim. Clive had reduced the holder of that office to the position of a cypher, possessing neither money with which to bribe nor territory to bestow. When Nujmu'd daulah died, his brother and next heir, Saifu'd daulah, succeeded him as a matter of course. The communications between Calcutta and Murshidábád on this occasion related merely to the annual allowance from the revenues of the three provinces to be granted to the new Núwáb-Názim. This was, after consideration, reduced from fifty-three to forty-one lakhs.*

With the uneventful succession of Saifu'd daulah the interest in Murshidábád ceased. The success of Clive's measures in this respect did not make him less attentive to the policy to be pursued on his frontier. Like all great men who have introduced a new political system, Lord Clive believed his work to be perfect, to be proof, so long as his system were enforced, against the ravages of time. He clung to the

* The example was infectious. In 1770 the forty-one lakhs fell to thirty-one; and in 1793, from thirty-one to sixteen, at which figure it remains.

maintenance of the Núwáb Názim in the titular position of the Súbahdár of the three provinces, because, he wrote, "under the sanction of a súbah* every encroachment that may be attempted by foreign powers can be effectually crushed, without any apparent interposition of our own authority, and all real grievances complained of by them can, through the same channel, be examined into and redressed." He would have the revenue still collected by the servants of the Núwáb-Názim, because "to appoint the Company's servants to the offices of collectors, or, indeed, to do any act by an exertion of the English power which can equally be done by the Núwáb at our instance, would be throwing off the mask, would be declaring the Company súbah of the provinces." He went so far only as to institute a grade of English officers, called supervisors, to watch the collections of revenue made by the native officers. That was the fullest extent to which he was prepared to go. He would have all the Company's servants, those supervisors excepted, confined entirely to commercial matters only.

Strong as he was in his convictions on these points, he was even more determined as to the foreign policy which alone could maintain the possessions he had acquired for the Company. Never did the late Lord Lawrence insist more strongly on the maintenance, as a measure of finality, of the Pesháwar frontier, than

* "Súbah" is here used to signify "authority of a Súbahdár or governor."

did Lord Clive for the frontier of Alláhábád. In both instances to pass beyond the boundary line fixed in the minds of these great men was to incur the certainty of ultimate ruin.

Fortunately, we have Lord Clive's own words on the point. In the State paper* from which I have just quoted he writes: "Our possessions should be bounded by the provinces: studiously maintain peace,—it is the groundwork of our prosperity; never consent to act offensively against any powers, except in defence of our own, the King's" (of Dihlí) "or the Núwáb-Vazír's dominions, as stipulated by treaty; and, above all things, be assured that a march to Dihlí would be not only a vain and fruitless project, but attended with destruction to your own army, and perhaps put a period to the very being of the Company in Bengal." In a word the foreign policy of Lord Clive "was a policy of isolation. The English were to lie snugly ensconced in the three provinces of Bengal, Bihár, and Oríśá. The frontier of Oudh was to form a permanent barrier against all further progress." The writer, from whom I have quoted,†

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* This paper is given *in extenso* in Mr. Talboys Wheeler's *Early Records of British India.*

† Mr. Talboys Wheeler, in *Early Records of British India.* May I be excused if I pursue the comparison made in the text, and adapt its words to the principle on which India is governed at the present moment? We should then read: "The foreign policy of the present Government with respect to India is a policy of isolation. The English are to lie snug in Bengal, in the North-West, and in the Panjáb. The frontier, Afghanistán,

proceeds to add: "Within a single decade this policy was thrown to the winds!"

It was with the conviction that he had settled the internal and external policy of the Company's possessions that Clive, worn out and suffering, returned to England (January 1767). But before I accompany him thither it will devolve upon me to record his dealings with the army, dealings called for by a conspiracy the dangerous nature of which contributed its full share to the anxieties which pressed upon him during his second administration.

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is to form a permanent barrier against all further progress." It is possible that the "finality" of the present day may share the fate of the "finality" of Lord Clive.

# CHAPTER XVII.

## Second Administration.—Military.

Amongst the instructions given by the Court of Directors to the Select Committee, of which Lord Clive was the animating and guiding spirit, was one of a very urgent character, to reduce the batta allowed to the officers of the army. As the allowance of batta constituted a considerable portion of the pay of the officers, and the withdrawal would be of serious consequences, it is necessary to enter into such detail as will place the position of the officers clearly before the reader.

In the earlier days of its formation the officers of the Bengal army drew a fixed rate of pay, which formed their net receipts when in garrison or at the Presidency town; but when they took the field they were allowed an extra sum to cover the expenses incurred thereby. When they were detached to an outstation, not being actually in the field, they were allowed half that sum. This allowance was called batta. After the battle of Plassey, Mír J'afar, in the

profusion of his gratitude for the efforts which had made him Súbahdár, had bestowed upon the officers an additional sum equal to the full batta. This was called "double batta," and so long as the army was in the field rendering services to Mír J'afar, that Núwáb, with the sanction of the Calcutta Council, continued to disburse it to the officers. Mír Kásim, on his accession, was anxious to confirm and continue the arrangement; but, in lieu of the actual payments to the Company which had so greatly contributed to the ruin of his predecessor, he assigned to them the three districts of Mednipúr, Bardhwán, and Chátgáon, the revenues of which would more than cover these and other similar incidental disbursements. By this arrangement the duty of providing double batta for the officers devolved upon the Company, and although, upon the whole, it was an arrangement by which the Company greatly benefited, the Court of Directors, ignoring the increase to their revenues, began at once to issue orders whereby the cession of the three districts would be made more lucrative still. Amongst the items which particularly attracted their attention was that referring to the grant of double batta, and they gave peremptory instructions for its discontinuance. The subject had, in the meanwhile, come under the examination of the Calcutta Council; and its members, after a full inquiry, had postponed execution of the orders of the Court of Directors until the Court should have had time to peruse and decide upon the documents they forwarded to England, and which set forth the case for the officers, that is, for the con-

tinuance to the officers of the double batta, in a very strong light. The Court replied, in a despatch dated 9th March 1763, that they could not admit the arguments of the officers to be of sufficient force; and they expressed a fear that whilst endeavouring to grant their military officers encouragement suitable to their merit, they might enable them to acquire such fortunes as might lead them to quit the service in a short space of time, "an inconvenience," added the despatch, "which of late had frequently happened."

Before this despatch could reach Calcutta—indeed, one month before it had been written—the Calcutta Council had appointed a special committee, of which Major Adams and Major Carnac were members, to examine and report upon the subject. But before the committee could finish its inquiries there broke out that war with Mír Kásim which tried to the utmost the resources of the Company. On the eve of a war it was not considered advisable to render discontented those upon whose energies the successful conduct of it depended, and the inquiry dropped.

The Court of Directors, throughout their administration of more than a century, never sufficiently considered the interests of the officers who devoted to them their best energies, and who were ever willing to give their lives for their country. Ready enough to reward isolated cases, forced upon them by public opinion, they systematically neglected the interests of the military service generally. Deaf to all reasoning, they displayed the salient quality of the narrow-

minded, of clinging to an idea which had once been imbibed. Rather than forego that idea they were ever ready to imperil the empire. Gratitude was never the motor of any of their actions.

The case of double batta for the officers was but one instance of this. Never, in the history of India, had the officers of the Bengal army deserved more richly of their country than in the campaign of 1763. But for their devotion, their heroism, their unsurpassed daring, Mír Kásim would have triumphed and Bengal would have been lost. Their reward was a still greater persistence on the part of the Court of Directors in withdrawing from them an allowance the necessity of which to meet the expenses of campaigning had been fully proved, and which by an existence of seven years (in 1764) had attained the position of a prescriptive right. In a despatch dated the 1st June 1764—whilst the army, be it remembered, having vanquished Mír Kásim, was opposed to the forces of the Emperor and the Núwáb-Vazír of Awadh—the Court reiterated their most positive orders that double batta should be withdrawn from the date of the receipt of that despatch; and, further, that the single batta should be reduced when circumstances would admit of it, that is, in cantonment and in garrison, in the former of which only half single batta was to be allowed, in the latter no batta at all.

This despatch reached Calcutta when the army was in the field, just after it gained the decisive victory of Baksar. It was impossible, the Calcutta Council felt, to carry out the orders of the Court at such a

moment. Its members had, too, an additional reason for delay. Lord Clive and two members of the Select Committee, appointed virtually to supersede them, were on their way from England. They resolved, therefore, to postpone the execution of the orders of the Court, and to leave the consideration of them to the new authorities.

Lord Clive and the Select Committee duly arrived. How they carried out their instructions to root out corruption and bribery from the Civil Service I have already recorded. Animated in the execution of the instructions he had received by a stern determination to strike and spare not, Clive, who had shown no mercy to the civilians, could not deal otherwise with the soldiers. As soon, then, as he could tear himself from affairs which he considered more pressing or of greater importance, he issued orders that from the 1st January 1766 the double batta should be withdrawn, except as regarded the 2nd Brigade—then stationed at Alláhábád—" which, on account of the high price of provisions at that station, and the expense of procuring the necessary European articles at so great a distance from the Presidency, was to be allowed the double batta in the field, and the old original single batta in cantonments or in garrison, until it should be recalled within the provinces." This rule was to be applied to all troops employed beyond the river Karmnásá. The rest of the army was to receive single batta when marching or in the field, and half single batta when in cantonment or in garrison as at Mungér and Patná; but when at the

Presidency or its immediately subordinate factories the officers were to receive no batta at all, but were to be furnished with free quarters in lieu of it. Lord Clive reported the reasons which had guided him in coming to this arrangement in a letter dated the 31st of the same month (January 1766).

The order met with no favourable reception in the army. It abolished privileges which the officers had come to regard as rights. These did not, however, all at once overstep the boundaries of good discipline. They discussed the matter amongst themselves, drew up, signed, and forwarded to the local government memorials in which the hardships which would accrue to them in consequence of the order were duly set forth. But for the moment they proceeded no further. The invariable reply given by Clive to the memorials sent in to him—that the orders of the Court were positive, and that no modification of the new rules could be permitted—seemed to deprive the officers of their last hope of redress.*

* There was one exception, and one only, made by Clive in the stern and rigid carrying out of the orders of the Court. This exception was made in favour of his friend and colleague, General Carnac. When Clive transmitted the new covenants to the army to be signed by the officers, all the officers signed excepting General Carnac. That General delayed his signature because he was expecting a present of two lakhs of rupees for which he had covenanted with the Emperor. Subsequently, after having received the present, he signed the covenant in Calcutta. Clive not only winked at this transaction, but subsequently exerted himself to obtain for it the sanction of the Court. The fact was that Carnac was not only a friend of Clive, but he was a large proprietor of Indian Stock.—*Vide* Broome's *History of the Bengal Army*, page 528 and note.

But the feeling of discontent, inspired by a sense of wrong, was not extinguished. As the effects of the order came to be felt, and opportunities of communication between the officers at various stations were developed, this feeling spread with extraordinary rapidity, especially amongst the officers below the rank of field officer. The regulations which Clive had promulgated regarding the salt duty—regulations which secured to all officers above the rank of captain a certain and very lucrative share in the profits of the trade in that commodity—had rendered the field officers comparatively indifferent to the batta question. Their whole pay did not equal the profits of the salt duty. But the captains and subalterns, the men receiving small allowances and who had borne the brunt of the recent campaigns, and whose chances of promotion to higher grades had recently been lessened by the introduction into the army of officers who had not served in their Presidency—these were the men who felt most acutely the effects of the new batta order. Coming, as it did, almost simultaneously with the order which forbade them to trade and yet reserved the profits of trade for their more fortunate comrades, it struck them behind and before. They could not but feel that they had been sacrificed to secure opulence for others; that their right of trading and their batta had been taken away, in order that a larger share of the emoluments of the service might flow into the laps of the very men who were instrumental in oppressing them.

The bitterness engendered by feelings of this nature

soon found an outlet in combination. The correspondence between the officers of the three brigades of which the army was composed proved in a very short time that the indignation caused by the new measure was universal; and although, on the first mooting of the question of combination to resist it, the officers stationed at Alláhábád and Karrah, whilst approving of the general idea, expressed an opinion that they could not join in it whilst they were, technically, on service—Alláhábád and Karrah belonging to the Emperor—yet, under the influence of the urgency of their comrades in the other brigades and of their own strong feelings, they soon waived their objection and gave their full adherence to the general scheme.

The pressure which the officers proposed to bring to bear upon the Government was to all appearance irresistible. I must ask the reader to recollect that at the time the Maráthás were moving rapidly to that position of predominance in Western, Central, and North-western India to which they fully attained towards the close of the eighteenth century; that those daring warriors had for years preceding cast a longing eye on the fat pastures of Bengal; that the recent acquisitions of the English had brought them into closer territorial proximity to the Maráthás; and that, at that very moment, it was believed that the latter were meditating, with respect to British territory, one of those daring and sudden irruptions which had been the terror of the Mughals. Whilst the air was full of rumours pointing to such an event as certain and

immediate, the sudden resignation of their commissions by all the officers of the Bengal army below the rank of Major would assuredly terrify the Government into a revocation of the batta order. So, at least, reasoned the officers; so believed, likewise, one officer of higher rank than the discontented. This was Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Robert Fletcher, commanding the 1st Brigade, who was not only cognisant of all the proceedings of the combining officers, but who approved them.

After a few weeks' correspondence and meetings, the conspiring officers arranged that committees formed of the adjutants and quartermasters of each brigade should collect all the commissions, and should tender them to the respective commanding officers of the brigades on the 1st June; that they should at the same time signify the intention of the officers to serve till the 15th of that month as volunteers without pay, by which time the action of the Government would certainly be known. The binding articles of the confederation were of the strictest character. Absolute secrecy was a first condition. Every officer took an oath that he would at the hazard of his own life preserve the life of any member who might be condemned by a court-martial for participation in the confederacy. The officers believed, however, that it would be possible to devise a scheme which would protect them from any such risk. Each officer bound himself, further, in a penalty of five hundred pounds not to accept his commission again unless batta were restored. Further, a general sub-

scription was raised, by contributions according to rank, to form a fund* for the support of such members as should stand in need of it, in case the commissions should be accepted, or, in case—as many anticipated—the ringleaders should be made to suffer, whilst the batta rules were restored. From this fund, likewise, the expenses of officers so treated were to be defrayed, and commissions of equal rank in the King's service to those they had lost purchased for them.

Such was the formidable confederacy which confronted Clive in the early part of 1766. So thorough was its organisation that, although the weaving of its threads had lasted nearly four months, and had covered the country between Calcutta and Alláhábád, not the slightest intimation of its existence reached the authorities until they were officially informed thereof by the commander of the 1st Brigade—a man who sympathised with the movement and who desired its success.

In the third week of April that commander, Sir Robert Fletcher, received at Mungér a letter from Sir R. Barker commanding the 3rd Brigade, the head-quarters of which were at Bánkípúr, a letter in

* In a previous page, 374–5, I have recorded the methods adopted by the civilians to show their animosity to Lord Clive. They manifested their feelings on this occasion by subscribing the sum of a hundred and forty thousand rupees to the fund raised by the combining officers; by encouraging them in every possible manner—even by supplying them from the records of the public offices with the proceedings of the Government in respect to the military movement.

which Barker gave the details of a circumstance which had occurred in his brigade, and which had roused in his mind a suspicion that the officers were combining on the batta question, and inquired whether Fletcher had noticed any movement in his brigade of a similar tendency. In reply, Fletcher made light of the whole matter, mentioned that there had been some talk on the part of the officers of combining some three months ago, but that he imagined it had died away; that if the officers did resign, an opportunity would be afforded to the Government of getting rid of bad bargains. He forwarded a copy of the letter to Lord Clive.

Meanwhile the circumstance which had aroused Sir R. Barker's suspicions, and which related to a quarrel between two officers occasioned by the refusal of one of them to surrender his commission, had caused a change in the plan of the confederates. Instead of waiting for the 1st June, those in the 1st and 3rd Brigades resolved to act on the 1st May. Intimation of this change was sent to the officers of the 2nd Brigade, but their reply had not been received when the time for action arrived.

Well aware of the change in the plans of the confederates, Sir Robert Fletcher addressed to Lord Clive, on the 25th April, a letter, in which he announced that the officers of his brigade seemed determined to make an effort for the recovery of their batta; and that they intended to forward to him their commissions before the 1st of the coming month, and to intimate at the same time that they declined to

draw any advance of pay for that month, but that they were willing to serve as volunteers without pay until the decision of the Government should be known. Lord Clive was at Murshidábád when, on the 28th April, he received this letter. The day following, a letter reached Captain S. Carnac of the 2nd Brigade, giving details of the intentions of the officers, and inviting him to join them. About the same time, also, letters to the same purport reached Captain Pearson, of the 1st Brigade, Secretary to the Commander-in-Chief, and Captain Smith, Aide-de-Camp to the same high officer. These letters, communicated to the authorities, not only confirmed Sir R. Fletcher's report, but proved how widely spread and how deeply laid was the conspiracy.

To make the position of the Government understood, I shall state in a few short sentences the circumstances which they had to face. The treaty with the Emperor and the Núwáb-Vazír had been concluded too recently to have given the English a permanent footing in the extensive territories to the north and north-west of the province of Bihár, which they occupied in virtue of that treaty. Whilst their hold was thus slight, intelligence had been received by the Government that a Maráthá army, sixty thousand strong, was preparing to invade the newly-acquired province of Karrah, and preparations had been made to meet this invasion by stationing Colonel Richard Smith, with the artillery and the native part of his brigade, the 2nd, at Súrajpúr. Whilst war was thus impending, nineteen-twentieths of the officers of the army threatened to

throw up their commissions unless certain rights, long enjoyed, should be guaranteed to them. But that represented only a part of the danger. It has to be mentioned, to the credit of the combined officers, that they had made no attempt to stir up their men to revolt. All the contemporary accounts of the mutiny agree that had they done so the men would have followed them—and that they would have followed them was well known to Lord Clive and the Council. The further danger was that, under the influence of despair, the officers might be induced to adopt this decisive expedient.

This, then, was the position; an enemy threatening the frontier, the officers of the army guarding that frontier threatening to resign and leave the country unless the privileges which they had enjoyed for seven years were restored to them! It was a position to try the nerves of many a ruler. The danger was so great that to most men the cost of purchasing immunity from it would have appeared trifling. Imagine such a thing happening in the present day! Imagine, for example, the constabulary of Ireland rising almost in a body at a moment when assassination and treason stalked through that unhappy island, and demanding as the price of the continuance of their services an increase of their pay and an augmentation of their privileges! Well can we believe how weak-kneed *doctrinaires*, anxious for peace at any price, hoping that they would survive the deluge which would inevitably come after them, would "with a light heart" concede all their demands! Fortunately,

however, for British hold on India, the policy of inviting murder and revolt in order to force from the public revolutionary concessions had not been invented in 1766. In those days it was the simple and natural custom to repress disorder when disorder arose, and to examine grievances, if grievances there were, after the disorder had been repressed.

Great, however, as was the danger caused by the mutiny of the officers in 1766, appalling it would have seemed to many, there was one man on the spot, and he, fortunately, possessing the chief authority, who did not quail before it. The reader who has followed me so far cannot have failed to notice that difficulty and danger, especially a difficulty that was great and a danger that was urgent and pressing, were the two circumstances which roused the faculties of Clive to an extent almost superhuman. Never was he so grand, never more resolute, more fixed, more confident, never more certain of success, than when he was face to face with a state of affairs which have caused the hearts of most men to beat with a terrible fear. Talk to him, as no doubt many did talk to him, of surrender! Neither was the word in his dictionary, nor was the idea it signified in his organization. Never was he more resolved to carry out his orders regarding batta than at the moment when it suddenly came to him that, almost in the presence of an enemy, the officers of his own army had combined to resign their commissions if he did not accede to their demands!

His conduct on this occasion stands out a model to statesmen of all time, illustrating the manner in which

to encounter and repress a mutinous combination of subordinates. Formidable though the conspiracy undoubtedly seemed, Clive's experience of men enabled him to detect, almost at a glance, the one weak point, the dislocation of which would cause the edifice to crumble to the dust. The very condition of the several combining officers indicated a solution. Conspiracies, he argued, are made of ringleaders and followers—the former, men who have little to lose by its failure: the latter, men who risk their all on the success of the plot, and follow almost blindly those whom they have been taught to look up to and obey. Applying this rule to the formidable combination with which he was called upon suddenly to deal, Clive recognised in the list of conspirators a number of senior officers who, by trade or otherwise, had made their money, and whom the loss of their commissions would but slightly affect. These, then, must be the ringleaders—the men with whom he would have to deal sternly and sharply. The others, poor sheep, had but followed their seniors, men whom they had obeyed on the field of battle, and whose authority they still recognised in a matter affecting rights which they, the seniors, regarded as prescriptive.

The combination, narrowed by this division, ceased to present to Clive a very formidable aspect. He had but to strike down the ringleaders and the whole of the remainder would submit—probably even penitentially submit. His line of action was thus clearly traced from the very first hour of his acquaintance with the conspiracy. The very day, then, which

followed the receipt of Sir R. Fletcher's letter (29th April) he formed a special committee to take the necessary measures for dealing with the case on the basis of resisting the demands of the mutineers, and of striking a blow at the ringleaders such as would render such unmilitary combination impossible in the future. Of this committee Clive took the chair himself; General Carnac and Mr. Sykes were the members.

The first question discussed by the committee had reference to the provision of officers to supply the places of the ringleaders. This was solved by the transmission, then and there, of a despatch to the Calcutta Council requiring them to write to the Madras Government a full account of the urgency of the case, accompanied by a request that that Government would at once send round as many officers below the rank of field-officer as could be spared, and authorising it to hold out every encouragement to the officers who would show their zeal for their country's service by agreeing to accept the offer.

The Committee next passed a resolution to the effect that an officer resigning his commission should be precluded from holding any situation whatever in the Company's service. They then forwarded copies of these resolutions to the officers commanding the three brigades, with authority to make the contents known to their officers, if they should consider it advisable, in the interests of the Government, to do so.

But the efforts of Clive to meet the emergency

were not confined to passing resolutions. There were officers also at Murshidábád. All of them had entered into the combination and had sent in their commissions. With these men Clive entered into personal communication. He pointed out to them that their combination, however much it might embarrass the Government for a few weeks, could not possibly succeed; that they were recklessly sacrificing their own interests. He went still further: he told them that the conspiracy into which they had entered struck at the root of all discipline; that no Government worthy of the name could yield to the threats of its servants; and that if they persisted they would have to make to force the concession which he recommended them to grant to his persuasion. These arguments, directed mainly at the ringleaders, were successful. The two senior captains, after long hesitation, gave way and agreed to retain their commissions. Their example was followed by every other officer at Murshidábád, with the exception of two lieutenants. These, deaf to reason, persisted in sending in their commissions. Their resignations of the service were accepted.*

Encouraged by his success here, Clive wrote to the Calcutta Council to urge upon its members the advisability of attempting a similar plan of personal remonstrance with the combined officers in and near

* Both these officers were subsequently restored at their own urgent solicitation, and on their expressing contrition for their conduct.

Calcutta. I may anticipate events by stating here that the Council followed this recommendation, and with considerable success. By degrees all the officers, except two captains, ringleaders, and one follower, an ensign, returned to a sense of duty. The resignation of the commissions of the three recalcitrants I have referred to was accepted.* Clive having thus pacified Murshidábád and ensured the pacification of the Presidency division, proceeded to Mungér, the real head-quarters of the conspiracy.

Meanwhile, at that place, at Bánkípúr, and at Alláhábád, events had been marching with considerable rapidity. At Mungér all the officers below the rank of field-officer had, in a collective letter signed by them all, tendered their resignations, alleging, as the reason, that in consequence of the recent orders regarding batta they could not, with the exercise of the most rigid economy, live upon their pay; further stating, however, that, to prevent embarrassment to the Company, they would serve for the next fifteen days without pay, and that they would act in such a manner as to prevent any suspicion arising amongst their men alike as to their conduct and to the reasons which actuated them. Sir R. Fletcher acknowledged this letter, and agreed to forward it, at the same time expressing his approval of the action of the officers in so far as related to

* These officers, too, were ultimately restored; but one of them, Captain Hampton, a very prominent ringleader, not for several years after the collapse of the conspiracy.

their abstaining from any communication with their men on the subject.

At Bánkípúr matters wore at first a somewhat more serious aspect. There, as already related, an officer had quarrelled with another on the subject of sending in his commission, and this quarrel, by rousing suspicions in the mind of Sir R. Barker, had caused the letter to Sir R. Fletcher of which I have already spoken. Subsequently both these officers had been brought to a court-martial, and the proceedings before that Court had convinced Barker that his previous suspicions had been only too well founded. He had at once communicated with Lord Clive, then at Murshidábád. Lord Clive in reply had directed him to place under arrest every officer whose conduct should seem to him to come under the construction of mutiny, and to detain those who might be thus arrested at Bánkípúr until a general court-martial of field-officers could be summoned. To make such a court possible Lord Clive promoted two captains upon whom he could rely to the senior rank. The officers at Bánkípúr, however, were not one whit behind their brethren at Mungér. On the 1st May they, too, tendered their resignations, accompanying the tender by a similar offer to serve for fifteen days longer.

Sir Robert Barker, however, was a man of a stamp different to that of his colleague at Mungér. He had not, like Fletcher, sympathised with the grievances of his officers. Instead, then, of merely acknowledging the receipt of the commissions, he declined to accept the resignations, returned the commissions, and, causing

four ringleaders to be arrested, despatched them that very day by water to Calcutta!

The effect of prompt and resolute action when dealing with large bodies of discontented men is almost always decisive. It was so on this occasion. The combined officers at Bánkípúr, paralysed by the blow struck at their ringleaders, continued to perform their duty without a murmur. Barker followed up the blow by sending an express to Lord Clive detailing all that had occurred, sending a list of the officers who had tendered their resignations, indicating the names of those who had chiefly instigated the movement, and requesting that a few trustworthy officers might be despatched to Bánkípúr to provide for an emergency.

Before Lord Clive had received these reports he had despatched to Mungér two field-officers, the senior of whom was Major Champion, and three captains, to prepare the way for his arrival. On the 6th May, just after he had received the reports of the events of the 1st at Mungér and Bánkípúr, he himself quitted Murshidábád for the former place. He was accompanied by General Carnac, and by five captains and one lieutenant who had come round from Madras the previous year to fill up places caused by the increase of the army, and who could be thoroughly depended upon.

Whilst Clive and the officers who had preceded him are journeying to Mungér I propose to glance at the state of affairs in the other parts of the British possessions. At Calcutta the action of the Council had

corresponded in every way to the wishes expressed by the illustrious man who from Murshidábád had directed its policy. It had transmitted to the other Presidencies pressing letters urging the immediate despatch thence of officers below the rank of Major; it had applied to the merchants and traders of Calcutta to enter the service, either permanently or temporarily, offering great advantages in regard to trade to those who would give them temporary assistance. It had made the same offers to Englishmen settled in the provinces;* and it had written to Sir R. Fletcher a letter, sent through Lord Clive, authorising him to accept every resignation that was tendered and to send down to Calcutta every officer who should resign, within twenty-four hours of his taking that step.

But there was another part of the Bengal Presidency where the danger seemed too threatening to be conjured away by measures which could only take effect in a future which, though not very distant, was still a future. I allude to the station of Súrajpúr in the newly-acquired province of Karrah, where, it will be recollected, Colonel Smith had taken post with the artillery and native portion of the 2nd Brigade to check the first advance of the Maráthás. It will be further recollected that it was upon the chance of a Maráthá invasion that the combined officers had counted.

* The appeal to the mercantile community produced small results. The general feeling was with the combined officers. Only two gentlemen in Calcutta, and only one outside that place, came forward in response to the appeal.

Such an invasion would of necessity, they argued, make the Government pliable to their demands. Fortune seemed to favour them, for, at this very time, when they had tendered their resignations, information came to Súrajpúr that a considerable detachment of the Maráthá force had taken up a position nearly opposite Karrah; and that the Péshwá, Bálájí Ráo, at the head of sixty thousand horse, had arrived at Kalpí and was collecting boats to cross the Jamná. The emergency was great, the danger threatening.

But great as was the danger, and pressing as was the emergency, Clive was there to meet the crisis. Amongst his many gifts, natural and acquired, Clive possessed, moreover, a profound knowledge of men. He had faith in the sense of honour which inspires a British officer. He was confident that that sense of honour would not allow him to abandon his post in the presence of an enemy. He wróte then to General Smith, investing him with full powers to act under all possible circumstances. He told him that he could not believe that officers would desert their posts in the presence of an enemy; but that, should such an improbable event happen, should his officers show a determination to mutiny, and should the enemy at the same time advance, then—but in no other case—he was authorised to come to terms with the officers. The safety of the Empire was before all, and that must be maintained. Continuing the history of the events at Súrajpúr somewhat out of their proper order, I may state that the opportunity of testing the sense of honour of the officers in an extreme event did not

arise. The Maráthás did not invade the territory held by the British. How the officers would have acted under circumstances which did not arise it would be profitless to surmise. It must suffice to record here that they were, in firm adherence to the common compact, not one whit behind their brethren at the other stations. On the 6th of May they all, with two exceptions, tendered their resignations. After some vain attempts made by Colonel Smith to recall them to a sense of duty, he ordered five of the ringleaders to proceed to Calcutta. A sixth, the adjutant of his brigade, behaved in so outrageous a manner that the Colonel had him arrested by sipáhís and taken to Patná, to be tried there by a general court-martial.

The insubordination, meanwhile, had broken out at Alláhábád. The officer commanding there, Major Smith, serving under the orders of the Colonel of the same name at Súrajpúr, behaved, however, with an energy and a resolution beyond praise. Finding that all his officers were tainted with the spirit of mutiny, but that four of them were less infected than the remainder, he turned out the sipáhís, upon whose fidelity he could depend, and placed all the officers, except the more moderate four, under arrest, warning them at the same time that, should they attempt to break their arrest or to create any disturbance, the sipáhís had orders to shoot them down. This spirited behaviour produced unconditional submission and promises of amendment. Major Smith then allowed all the officers, six of the ringleaders excepted, to return

to their duty. These six he sent to Patná, there to be tried.

At Súrajpúr a similar course of proceeding, following upon that adopted by Major Smith, produced an almost similar result, the only difference being that the number of obstinate malcontents was greater. About one half of the officers returned to their duty, the others were sent under arrest to Calcutta.

I must return now to Lord Clive. On his way to Mungér, that nobleman received an intimation that the officers at that station were writing to their comrades in Madras, urging them not to allow any promises to persuade them to come round, as the cause was the cause of the officers of the three Presidencies. To prevent the arrival of communications which might defeat the designs of the Government Clive at once sent by express a recommendation to the Council, to detain all private letters to and from Madras, except such as could not be suspected of relating to the combination. From Fletcher he continued to receive letters which represented the officers as continuing to do their duty, though obstinate in their resolution to maintain their rights, and confident of success; that he had found it impossible to detect the ringleaders, but had despatched to Calcutta two officers whom he suspected of having taken an active part in the combination. A few days later Fletcher reported that the conduct of the troops was admirable, and that he could thoroughly depend upon their fidelity; that he had given commissions to four trustworthy men, an assistant surgeon, two

cadets, and a sergeant; that the officers generally were beginning to grow impatient under the delay which had occurred in dealing with them; and that, although he had persuaded them to await the arrival of the Governor, they were threatening further combinations, and that he anticipated that it would be necessary in the end to have recourse to force.

I have already stated that Lord Clive had been preceded to Mungér by two field officers and three captains, charged to use their utmost efforts to restore order, and that the senior of these was Major Champion. Champion, who commanded the 1st European Regiment, possessed spirit and resolution. He and his comrades reached Mungér on the night of the 12th May. Late as was the hour of their arrival, they were surprised to hear drums beating, and other sounds indicative of disturbance. Proceeding then to Sir R. Fletcher's quarters, they found half the European regiment there drinking and singing, and the drums and fifes beating and playing. This was a picture very different to that which Fletcher was representing to Lord Clive as existing. The following morning Champion and his colleagues went amongst the officers and attempted to reason with them. Finding the ordinary arguments of little avail, Champion reproached them with their ingratitude to Lord Clive, who had but just devoted the legacy he had received from Mír J'afar to be a fund for their benefit.

In reply the officers generally expressed a regret that matters had proceeded so far; they had fully expected that the Government would have granted

their demands; but that they were now too much engaged to the other brigades to draw back. They added that they had never heard of the purpose to which Mír J'afar's legacy to Lord Clive was to be devoted; that, had they been made aware of it, self-interest as well as gratitude would have prevented the combination. They attributed the blame of the reticence which had been displayed in this respect to Sir R. Fletcher, whom they accused likewise of having originated the combination, and of having used them as tools to carry out his own private views of opposition to Lord Clive. They expressed themselves anxious for a personal explanation with Lord Clive, and finally volunteered their services in the event of any disturbance arising from the conduct of the European troops—which, they admitted, might be expected.

Within a convenient distance of the fort of Mungér were the lines of Kharakpúr, so called from the range of lofty hills which bears that name. Whilst the European troops occupied the fort, the native battalions were located in the lines of Kharakpúr. Thither, then, after their conference with the officers, Champion and his colleagues proceeded. The moment was critical; the European troops, taking example from their officers, were verging on mutiny; force alone, it was clear, would restrain them; it was therefore necessary to trust to the active loyalty of the sipáhís. Proceeding then to Kharakpúr, Champion made the expected arrival of Lord Clive the pretext for turning out the two battalions of sipáhís. It was late in the

evening before the necessary arrangements could be made. The two native battalions were then marched, under the orders of Captain F. Smith, to the general parade-ground. There they lay all night under arms. In the morning they were marched to their own parade-ground within the fort.

During the afternoon of the next day Smith received information that the Europeans, infantry and artillery, were turning out to mutiny. Without the smallest hesitation he ordered his two sipáhí battalions to march against them. These, knowing their destination, as unhesitatingly obeyed. Smith, who was well acquainted with the ground, made a rush for the Saluting Battery—the key of the position. On seizing it he beheld the European infantry and artillery preparing to leave the fort with their officers. But the moment the Europeans caught sight of the two battalions of sipáhís occupying a position dominating their own—their bayonets fixed and their muskets loaded—they hesitated and fell back. Smith took advantage of their confusion to tell them that unless they immediately returned to their barracks he would fire upon them. Just at the moment Sir R. Fletcher came up, harangued the Europeans, and even distributed money amongst them. The men then turned in, saying that they had been under the impression that their Colonel would have placed himself at their head; but that, as such was not the case, they would stay and die with him alone: their officers might go where they listed.

By this time the conviction had stolen over Sir

R. Fletcher that he had played a double game too long; that it was time now to leave off running with the hare. He, therefore, took up a very resolute position; ordered all the recalcitrant officers to leave the fort within two hours under pain of being sent off under a guard, and wrote to Lord Clive a letter, in which he commented with marked severity upon their conduct. In that letter, however, he made the remarkable admission that since the month of January he had striven to gain the confidence of the officers, bent, as he believed them to be, on combining against the Government; that he had even gone so far as to approve some of their schemes;—in order, he added, that they might do nothing without his knowledge. By his own confession, then, Sir R. Fletcher had stooped to betray the officers. In reality, as will be seen, he had betrayed the trust reposed in him by the Government.

The evening of the following day, the 15th, Lord Clive reached Mungér. The next morning all the troops, European and native, were paraded. After inspecting them minutely Lord Clive addressed the Europeans. He set before them very plainly the nature of the offence of which the officers had been guilty, and the little cause they had had for so unbecoming a manifestation. He explained that the grant of double batta had been, and had always been held to be, an indulgence granted under peculiar circumstances, and had never before been claimed as a right; that in withdrawing that indulgence he had merely obeyed the orders of the Company, whose ser-

vants they all were; and that those who had resisted those orders, by combining to disobey them, had committed insubordination amounting to mutiny; that such conduct could not be allowed, and he was determined that the ringleaders should suffer the severest punishment accorded for such offences by martial law, and that the lesser offenders should be deported. Lord Clive concluded his speech by a few stirring words, dwelling on the fact that, a soldier himself, he had the deepest sympathy with soldiers, and that he had recently endeavoured to demonstrate that sympathy in a practical manner, by devoting to the interests of the army the large legacy he had received from the late Mír J'afar. He then addressed a few words, through an interpreter, to the sipáhís, applauding them for their conduct on the 14th, and assuring them that their fidelity to their duty, and their zeal for the interests of their masters had not been unappreciated. As a proof of this, he bestowed honorary rewards upon the native commandants and officers, and ordered two months' double pay to be disbursed to the men.

It will be understood that none of the combined officers were present at this parade. Under the orders of Sir R. Fletcher of the 14th, that they should leave the fort within two hours, they had encamped within a short distance of Mungér, intending to await there the arrival of the recalcitrant officers of the other brigades. But they soon found that they had to deal with a man who would stand no trifling. No sooner was the parade concluded, than Lord Clive sent the

combined officers an order to proceed to Calcutta forthwith; and, that there might be neither hesitation nor mistake, he despatched with the order a detachment of sipáhís to see that it was carried out on the spot. This measure produced an effect even greater than seemed at first within the bounds of probability. In the first place it rid Mungér of the mutinous officers. By threes and fours, some marching, some proceeding by water, these set out for Calcutta. In the next it brought to a proper sense of duty the subalterns at the out-stations. These, as much implicated as their comrades at Mungér in the combination, had hitherto been prevented by distance, or by want of opportunity, from sending in their commissions. Ordered now to proceed to the head-quarter station to take up the duties of their comrades who had left, they obeyed with a lamb-like docility. The fate of their comrades had warned them. They were joined a few days later by ten or twelve untainted officers from Calcutta. By their arrival the garrison duties of the station were temporarily provided for. Lord Clive did not wait for this result. The proceedings of the 16th had convinced him that he had dealt a crushing blow to mutiny at Mungér: He started then, the following morning, for Bánkípúr. He arrived there on the 20th.

In a previous page* I have recorded how Sir R. Barker, commanding at that station, had, for the moment, paralysed the plans of the mutinous officers,

* Page 414.

by returning to them their proffered commissions and by despatching four of their ringleaders to Calcutta. The effect of this act of vigour, decisive for the moment, was unhappily only temporary. The officers, sustained by the reports received from their comrades at other stations, and by the conviction that they had only to remain firm to gain all their ends, attempted to do that behind the back of their commander which they had failed to accomplish before his face. They, therefore, sent their commissions *en bloc* to Lord Clive. Whilst continuing to perform their duties with the same zeal and regularity as before, they used every endeavour, by their demeanour in social life, to impress Sir R. Barker with the conviction that their determination to insist upon their rights—as they considered them—was unshaken.

But they had mistaken their own powers of endurance. The attitude of Lord Clive at Mungér, the restoration of order at that station, had tended to confirm a feeling which, it is but just to those officers to record, had been, for some days previously, gradually making its way amongst them. This was a feeling of repentance for their insubordinate conduct. When Lord Clive arrived, then, at Bánkípúr on the 20th, his task was one most grateful to himself. He had to pardon—to pardon all except the two or three who had greatly offended. Even these in the end were dealt with leniently.

Lord Clive was on the point then of proceeding to Alláhábád, when he received information that, owing to the firm action of Major William Smith at that

station and of Colonel Richard Smith at Súrajpúr, the combination in the 2nd Brigade had been crushed; that one half of the officers had returned to their duty and the remainder had been despatched for trial to Calcutta.* Under these circumstances, deeming his presence little necessary on a frontier the abandonment of which he was, at the moment, contemplating, he determined to remain for a short time in the central position of Patná, to issue thence the orders which would be required to repair the evils which the combination of the officers had caused.

It was a situation in which his calm, clear, and cool judgment was peculiarly calculated to shine. Absolutely free from personal feeling, he could, better than anyone else in the Presidency, temper mercy with justice, deal out punishment just sufficient for the offence and no more. No man, moreover, was so able as he to make provision against the recurrence of an outbreak, such as, if dealt with unskilfully, might have subverted the civil authority in Bengal.

The collapse of the combination had brought with it the consequences that might have been anticipated. The ringleaders and the others who had been sent for trial to Calcutta had now become clamorous for mercy. Restoration to the service, without double batta, was the burden of all their petitions. This boon was eventually granted to all except to the ringleaders of each brigade. To enhance its value, and to make the applicants realise the value of the com-

* *Vide* p. 418.

mission which they had imperilled, Lord Clive, in many instances, affected to hesitate and even did delay. The delay was designed and well-considered. Several officers had come round from other parts of India, in response to the appeal of the Bengal Government, to take the places of those who had sent in their commissions. It was necessary that these should not, at least, lose by their loyalty; that at all events they should hold in Bengal the position they had attained in Madras and Bombay. The consequence of this necessity was that the mutinous officers, when restored, lost considerable standing; some of them even were compelled to re-enter at the lowest step of their respective grades. This was but a just, and yet, as the result proved, a sufficient punishment for their misconduct.*

To prevent a recurrence of similar insubordination, the conditions alike of entry into the service and of return to it of those officers who had received, or who yet might receive, pardon, were altered so as to bind all military servants of the Company for a certain period of three years, and to require from them then, or at any subsequent time, notice in writing of their desire to resign.

* Shortly afterwards, the Court of Directors, always either illiberal or liberal in a wrong direction, issued instructions prohibiting the further promotion of officers who had taken a conspicuous part in the combination. These instructions were not repealed till September 1776. Several of the officers so punished rose subsequently to high positions and atoned, by gallantry in the field and by services rendered under difficult circumstances, for their temporary aberration.

There still remained the duty of dealing out punishment to the ringleaders. Some of the most prominent of these cases bring out into so strong a light the strong features of Lord Clive's character that they require a special mention.

Of the ringleaders who were tried at Patná by court-martial, one, Captain John Neville Parker, was acquitted. His guilt, however, was so evident that Lord Clive, in his capacity of Governor in Council, dismissed him the service and deported him to England. Shortly after his arrival there Parker brought an action against Lord Clive for the loss of his commission and allowances, but failed. Restored in 1769 as Lieutenant-Colonel, he rendered brilliant services to the Company, and eventually fell in action in 1781.

Two other officers, Captain Vernon Duffield and Ensign Robertson, who had been cashiered and ordered to England in the Company's ship "Lord Camden," attempted to resist the order in a somewhat novel manner. After a vain appeal to the civil authorities, they barricaded themselves in a house in Calcutta in which they had stored a stock of provisions sufficient to last beyond the date on which it had been announced that the "Lord Camden" would sail. As that vessel was to carry despatches, they felt tolerably confident that Lord Clive would not detain her on their account. Nor did he. He contented himself with placing a guard round the house, with instructions to use no violence, but to apprehend the officers the moment they should of their own accord leave it.

The two officers did quit the house as soon as they learned that the "Lord Camden" had sailed; were instantly seized, placed on board the "Anne" sloop, and sent, first to Madras, and thence to England. There they also attempted legal proceedings against Lord Clive, but failed.

Two other officers who attempted, after their dismissal, to remain in Calcutta and trade as free merchants, were likewise seized and deported.

But the case which most of all riveted the public attention in those days, and which deserves record in our own, was that of Sir Robert Fletcher.

This officer, a gallant and distinguished soldier, had resented the measures which Lord Clive and the Select Committee had taken with respect to the prohibition of presents from native chiefs, the reform of the Civil Service, and the restrictions upon trade. He had made no secret of the dislike to Lord Clive which those measures had roused within him, and when the order regarding double batta was issued he openly encouraged the officers to resist it. He told them that by that order the army was insulted, the services of the officers were rewarded with ingratitude, and that the evident object of Lord Clive was to reduce them to contempt and beggary. Had the combination succeeded there can be little doubt but that Sir R. Fletcher would have stepped to the front as its leader, and have used it for purposes beyond the simple abolition of the batta order. When it failed, he, as I have shown in a previous page, threw over the officers, and posed as a perfervid champion of law and order.

But the suspicions of Lord Clive had been aroused. Fletcher's letter from Mungér of the 13th May in which, whilst denouncing the ringleaders, he had stated that he had gone so far as to approve of some of their schemes in order that they might do nothing without his knowledge, had appeared to Lord Clive to be a very remarkable admission from a man who had endeavoured as much as possible in his despatches to excuse, or, at all events, to gloss over, the misbehaviour of his officers. After the mutiny had been suppressed, the indignation felt by the officers whom he had betrayed vented itself in letters, mostly anonymous, in which the previous encouragement he had given to the malcontents was detailed at length.

Of these anonymous communications Lord Clive took no notice. But when Sir Robert himself, urged by a guilty conscience, wrote to Lord Clive a letter, in which, amongst other statements, he admitted that he had broken the promises he had given to the officers, and requested an opportunity to clear himself with the world, Lord Clive placed him under arrest and brought him to a court-martial. At the trial which followed his guilt was proved to be greater than had been expected. He had been the soul of the conspiracy; had even suggested the course which the officers followed; had pointed to their certainty of success; had even upbraided one officer for not joining; and had pointed to the example of his own staff, who, notwithstanding the advantages of their position, were ready to enter into the combination.

There could be no resisting such evidence, and Sir Robert Fletcher was cashiered.*

With the fate awarded to the chief ringleader the story of the mutiny of the Bengal officers fitly ends. How dangerous it was may be gathered from the fact that, in the secret counsels of the combined officers, the rescinding of the order abolishing double batta was regarded only as a stepping-stone to further demands. The orders regarding trade and the acceptance of presents, though pointedly directed at the Civil Service, affected scarcely in a less degree the pockets of the officers. The wealth acquired by Carnac, by Fletcher, and by many others in lower positions, had been obtained by one or other of those means, both, till the second advent of Lord Clive, regarded as legitimate. The shock of the reform, then, was scarcely less felt by the military than by the civilians. It roused a sympathy between the two services which supported many a soldier in his action against the authorities. When the order regarding batta was issued, it was the moral support of the Civil Service, extending even to the ante-chamber of the Council, and even to the council-room itself, which

* The strange morality of those days not only overlooked the offence, but rewarded the offender. Fletcher, who had acquired great wealth in India, joined, on his arrival in England, the influential party which hated Lord Clive. His services for that party were, within a few years, rewarded by restoration to the service, and nomination to the post of Commander-in-Chief at Madras. There he displayed the same incapacity to serve which had necessitated his removal from the army in Bengal. He gave evidence of his insubordinate nature by taking a prominent part in the deposition and confinement of the Governor, Lord Pigot.

increased the conviction of the officers that they had only to ask boldly to obtain. Had they gained the day, it was the fixed intention of their leaders to demand concessions still more favourable to their interests. Those leaders—and prominent amongst them was Sir R. Fletcher himself—had resolved to demand the abolition of the new covenants prohibiting the receipt of presents from natives; the cancelment of the powers of the Select Committee; and the issue of an order forbidding the supersession of officers then in the service by officers from England, or from other Presidencies.

The collapse of this formidable conspiracy may, I think, be attributable to two causes: to the prompt and decisive measures taken by Lord Clive, and to the want of thoroughness on the part of the officers. These had made too sure of victory; they had couted upon an immediate surrender on the part of the authorities; they had not sufficiently considered all the possibilities which lay before the latter; they were utterly unprepared when Lord Clive adopted a course which they had never calculated upon. Expecting a parley preparatory to a surrender, they were surprised by a flank movement which severed them from their base. They had no course then but to yield. Had they proceeded further than they actually did proceed; had they drawn their men with them into the revolt; the crisis, in the opinion of contemporary authorities, would have been serious indeed. Stopping short of this, they could not stand against the resolute action of Clive.

To that resolute action the prompt collapse of the formidable combination is entirely due. It is impossible to pay too high a tribute to the judgment which, on the first knowledge of the mutiny, dictated the one course by which it was to be met and subdued; the firmness with which, under all circumstances, that course was adhered to; the decision, which gave it the vital power necessary for its success; the absence of passion, of revengeful feeling under great provocation, the presence of mercy tempering justice, which marked the proceedings of Lord Clive after the mutiny had been quelled. In a crisis, unlooked for as it was formidable, Clive manifested the same qualities which had gained for him the victory of Kávéripák, which had changed the surprise of Samiaveram into a triumph, which had animated him in the grove at Katwá—the qualities which mark a born leader of his fellows!

# CHAPTER XVIII.

## The Last Adieux to India.

The unremitting mental labour, the constant strain, the daily even the hourly excitement to which Lord Clive had been subjected, whilst the events recorded in the three preceding chapters were progressing, had worn him out. From the day of his landing in Calcutta, the 3rd May 1765, to the day of his return in the beginning of September, after his interview with the Núwáb-Vazír of Awadh (Oudh), he had not allowed himself the slightest recreation. Nor even then was he able to rest. His time and attention were immediately occupied by devising measures for the continuance for another year of the association for the regulation of the profits of the salt trade; for the raising of battalions of sipáhís for police duties; for the increase of the native army; for the compilation of a code of military regulations giving, amongst other rules, detailed instructions with reference to the allowances of officers under all possible circumstances, thus bringing contingent and contract

expenses under control, and establishing a stricter system of discipline. In all these measures the hand of the master was visible. Consequently the return to Calcutta, though, in view of the reforms which had been accomplished and of the formidable difficulties which had been overcome, bringing a relief from anxiety, caused but little diminution of mental labour.

Sensible, whilst his anxieties were still enormous and his difficulties had not been all overcome, before even some of them had been envisaged, that his strength was not equal to a prolonged residence in Bengal, Clive had, even in 1765, announced to the Court of Directors his intention of resigning his government as soon as he could do so without inconvenience to the public interests. The reply to that announcement, dated March 1766, and received by Lord Clive in December of the same year, was of a character which would have gratified any man. Whilst paying their tribute to "the penetration which had at once discerned the true interests of the Company in every branch," to "the rapidity with which he had restored peace, order, and tranquillity," to "the unbiassed integrity which had governed all his actions," the Court earnestly entreated Lord Clive to devote one year more of his invaluable services to India. The tone of the letter, the sense of deep obligation breathing in every line of it, the incense of admiration which pervaded it, make it almost unique amongst despatches from a governing body to an executive agent.

When Lord Clive received that letter he had already accomplished all and more than all the ends to attain which the Court had urged his further continuance in India. Unable, in consequence of the feebleness of the Court of Directors, to eradicate corruption, he had at least rendered the exercise of it difficult; he had provided in a circuitous manner for that increase of the income of the public servants which the Court would not openly sanction. He had reformed the Civil Service, re-organized the army, disbanded the levies of the Núwáb-Názim and instituted in their stead a military police under rules of discipline similar to those which obtained in the army; he had triumphed over serious mutiny, established an extended frontier, had placed the Company virtually in the position held by Siráju'd daulah in 1757; had brought the revenues into order, and established economy and efficiency where corruption and lavish expenditure had previously prevailed. This portion of his work may be described in a phrase which, if hackneyed, yet expresses clearly the extent of his labours. The phrase, too, has the merit of having been used by himself to signify his appreciation of the task he had accomplished. In all matters of judicial and revenue administration he had found Bengal an Augæan stable; he had been the Hercules who had cleansed it.

When, then, in December 1766, Lord Clive received the very gratifying letter from the Court to which I have referred, he felt that he had more than accomplished all that they had had at heart; that he had placed the civil, the revenue, the military, and the political

departments on a footing on which the ordinary attention of an honest man could easily maintain them. The reforms had been made, the new rules were in existence; it would devolve upon the Governor and his Council to see only that they were carried out.

If he had not been able to place public matters on the satisfactory footing to which he had brought them, Lord Clive, in spite of his failing health, would have remained to complete his work. But the work, so far as in an age of transition it could be accomplished, had been accomplished. Bound by the orders which fettered him, neither he nor any other man could at that time have carried further the work of reform.

The acute trials and difficulties to which Lord Clive, his colleagues, and his more highly-placed officers, had been subjected during his second administration had had the effect of bringing into strong relief the virtues and weaknesses of the latter. On the one side there came into strong light the baseness of Sir R. Fletcher, the culpable weakness and more than weakness of Mr. Sumner. On the other, the manner in which Colonels Richard Smith and Sir R. Barker had met and repressed the combination of their officers, had marked them out as men upon whom the fullest reliance under all circumstances could be placed. Similarly, Mr. Verelst, become by the collapse of Mr. Sumner, Governor designate, Mr. Sykes, and Mr. Carter, had displayed qualities which had endeared them to Clive. They had, he considered, evinced a complete appreciation of the situation, firmness against clamour, decision, and judgment.

The work allotted to him to perform accomplished, his own health utterly broken, and his body daily becoming more feeble, surrounded by men who, he was confident, would carry out his policy, Clive felt, in January 1767, that he might retire with honour from the country which he had won for England, and on whose soil there now remained for him no new fields to conquer. Preparatory to his departure he drew up and laid before his colleagues a valuable minute on the state of public affairs. In this he indicated in detail the dangers and difficulties against which it would be most necessary to guard; the necessity of not being content with making orders and regulations but of seeing them carried out, of keeping a very firm hand over subordinates, of dismissing from the service, or at least of suspending, any man who should disobey orders, of prosecuting the public work with zeal, diligence, and disinterestedness. He laid special stress upon the fact that inasmuch as the natives of India had always been accustomed to look upon supreme authority as concentrated in the person of one man, and would never understand the principle of divided power, it was expedient that the Governor should make an annual tour through the provinces, acting as a supervisor-general, to whom the injured could appeal.

Regarding foreign policy, he upheld the maintenance of the shadow of the superior authority of the Núwáb Názim: under that shadow the English were to rule; but in transactions with foreign settlers, such as the Dutch, the French, and the Danes, and

with the princes of India outside the three provinces, the shadow was invariably to be put forward. In foreign matters generally he advocated a policy of peace. "It is," he wrote, "the groundwork of our prosperity." The then existing frontier he regarded as the best possible frontier for English interests. He deprecated the lending of the British forces to the Núwáb-Vazír of Awadh for the furtherance of his ambitious designs; considered "the Rohílahs, the Játs, and all other northern powers to be at too great a distance ever to disturb the tranquillity of these provinces," and was convinced that it was only necessary to ensure friendly relations with the Núwáb-Vazír, the Nizám of Haidarábád, and the Maráthás, to be free from all apprehensions of war. To obtain the friendship of the Maráthás he even advocated the payment of chauth, or tribute, amounting to sixteen lakhs per annum, to the Rájá of Barár, for the zamíndári of the districts of Baleshwár (Balasore) and Katak (Cuttack). The Maráthás of Púnah and of the western Dakhan should, he thought, be controlled by maintaining a strict alliance with the Nizám.

This foreign policy was, I have before stated, quoting from a modern author,* a policy of isolation. The English were to be ensconced in the three provinces of Bengal, Bihár, and Orísá. The frontier of Awadh (Oudh) was to form a permanent barrier against all further progress.

Such were the main points of the minute which

* Mr. Talboys Wheeler—*Early Records of British India.*

Lord Clive laid before the Committee on the 16th, and of the supplement which he sent to it on the 23rd, January. On the former occasion he stated his approaching departure and the arrangements which, with the full powers he possessed, he intended to make in consequence. He announced that the Select Committee, which had effected so many reforms, would be continued, and that it would be composed of Mr. Verelst, who would succeed him as Governor; Colonel Richard Smith, who would succeed General Carnac as Commander-in-Chief; Mr. Sykes, Mr. Carter, and Mr. Beecher.

On the 29th of the same month, accompanied by General Carnac and several other friends, he embarked on board the ship "Britannia." The Calcutta which he saw for the last time on that eventful day had in ten years been transformed by him from the *status* of a conquered seat of a ruined commercial agency, occupied by the conqueror, into the flourishing capital of a possession as large as France.* Alone he had done it!

* The area of France, before the diminution caused by the late war with Germany, was computed at two hundred and three thousand five hundred square miles; that of Bengal, Bihár, and Orísá, inclusive of Arákan, is two hundred and three thousand nine hundred and forty-six.

# CHAPTER XIX.

## What kind of Success is that?

Whilst Clive is making his long voyage to England I propose to anticipate him and cast a bird's-eye view at the events which had occurred at the India Office during his absence of nearly three years. It will be recollected that immediately prior to his departure from England in 1764, his supporters had triumphed at the annual election of directors, and a personal friend of his, Mr. Rous, had been nominated chairman. This office continued to be held by Mr. Rous, and the majority continued to remain, throughout the period of Lord Clive's absence.

Two causes, however, were, during the same period, at work to weaken the number of Lord Clive's friends amongst the holders of Proprietary Stock—the body which controlled the election of the directors. One cause was the honesty of his friends; the other the bitter and revengeful feeling of his enemies.

The great successes of Clive in Bengal, his reform of the administration, the restoration of order in all

its branches, and especially the establishment of a sound financial system, had raised in the minds of a large number of the proprietors of East India stock exaggerated expectations regarding dividends. Even if the Company had possessed in the eastern world only the three provinces which Clive had conquered, these expectations could not, with honesty, have been fulfilled. The Company's finances had been only just recovering from the blow dealt them by the capture of Calcutta by Siráju'd daulah, when the misgovernment of the colleagues of Vansittart, and the long and expensive war with Mír Kásim and the Núwáb-Vazír, came to plunge them once again into difficulties. From the consequences of these difficulties Clive, during his second administration, had extricated them; and his work, solid and fruit-bearing, was a work the results of which would be realised in a very immediate future. The period was nevertheless a future. Even, then, had the Company enjoyed only the revenues of Bengal, Bihár, and Orísá, there existed no reason for the expectations formed by the proprietors. By 1768 a large increase of income might be expected, but up to that time the existing good administration would do little more than recoup the Company for the expenses of past misgovernment. But the Company had other territories besides Bengal. In Madras, the puppet Núwáb of the Karnátak whom they had set up, Muhammad Ali, had incurred enormous debts. These debts the Company had found it necessary to defray by loan, and this loan had locked up a large quantity of capital. The building of fortifications

had swallowed more, and the support of French prisoners had taken another large slice. In fact, the revenues of Madras, never very large, had not nearly sufficed to cover the expenditure which the possession of Southern India had entailed upon the Company. Then, again, a very great and a very useless expenditure had been forced upon the Madras Government by the Crown by the despatch (July 1762) from that presidency of a force of two thousand men to capture Manilla, capital of the Philippine Islands. Manilla was captured in 1762, and restored to Spain in 1763, so that Madras had been quit with the glory and the expense.

This combined expenditure, balanced only by receipts just beginning to flow in from Bengal, afforded no solid foundation for the demand made by the proprietary body for a large increase of dividends. It is the way of the world that proprietors should demand, and it is often unfortunate that they possess the power to dictate. It was especially so in the present case. Notwithstanding the opposition of the majority of the directors, the proprietors in 1766 raised the dividend from six per cent. to ten per cent. The reader will know how unjustifiable was the increase. Still more so was that decreed by the same body the following year, from ten to twelve and a half per cent. The evil effects of this change were felt immediately. The First Minister of the Crown, the Duke of Grafton, had strongly condemned the rapacity of the proprietors in increasing the dividend. He now prepared to make them pay for their rapacity.

He caused to be passed one Act which decreed that dividends should be taken only by ballot in general courts summoned specially for that purpose, and that no dividend should exceed ten per cent.; another, which compelled the Company, in consideration of their being permitted to hold the territorial revenues of India for five years, to pay annually four hundred thousand pounds into the public exchequer.

In this contest the friends of Clive had taken the honest view—the view that the dividends should not be unjustifiably increased. In the eyes of the rapacious proprietary, Clive suffered for this honest action. He suffered still more from the bitter vindictiveness of his enemies.

The crusade which Clive had made against corruption in Bengal, the consequent dismissal and forced resignations of several prominent officials, had made him many bitter foes. The dismissed and retired officials were all of them men who had accumulated large fortunes in India, chiefly by the means which Clive now condemned. They returned to England with bitter hatred in their hearts, resolved to devote their lives, their fortunes, their every energy, to the ruin of the man who had denounced their illicit proceedings. For this purpose they bought largely East India Stock, and, as every purchaser of five hundred pounds of stock carried a vote, they soon were able to form a minority formidable in numbers, and which, by uniting to it the old declared enemies of Clive, and the waverers, might soon hope to become a majority. Before Clive returned to

England, an opportunity was afforded to them of testing the strength of such a union.

When the members of the corrupt clique had reached England the Court of Directors resolved, upon the advice of the Crown and Company's lawyers, to bring them to trial for having received presents from natives after the Court's prohibitory order had reached them. Against this decision of the Court the inculpated officials resolved to appeal to the proprietors; and, that their appeal might be successful, they determined to take advantage of the hostile feeling which was known to exist against the Directors on the subject of the increased dividends. When, then, in May 1767, the majority of the Court of Proprietors voted, in opposition to the strong view expressed by the majority of the Court of Directors, the increase of the dividend from ten to twelve and a half per cent., the members of the corrupt clique took advantage of the excitement caused by the action of the majority of the Directors—known to be friends and adherents of Clive—and caused the question to be put that the prosecutions which had been instituted should be dismissed. They carried their point.

Two months later, 14th July, Clive landed in England. In the India House, thanks to the two causes I have stated, the tide was just beginning to turn. Ostensibly he was well received. The King and Queen admitted him to private audiences, and accorded to him a gracious welcome. The Court of Directors were not at all backward in their desire to do honour to one who had more than fulfilled all their expectations.

They, too, received him in full conclave* immediately after his audience with the Sovereigns, thanked him through their chairman for his splendid achievements, and immediately convened a general court to confirm the resolution recently passed by the Court of Proprietors to the effect that the jaghír granted by Mír J'afar should be continued to Lord Clive and his heirs for a further period of ten years beyond the date to which it had been already granted. At the general court the resolution was carried by a unanimous vote.

The feeling between Clive and the Court was not, however, really as cordial as it should have been. Clive was extremely sensitive on the subject of the grant which had been made him by Mír J'afar, and he resented the manner in which the account of that grant was thrust prominently in the foreground whilst the actual revenues of the territories he had acquired for the Company were studiously concealed. To authorise for ten years an income of some thirty thousand pounds a year from estates bringing in five millions is one thing; to authorise a similar amount from estates bringing in half a million is another. In the first case the reward is not disproportionate either to the total revenues, or to the services of the man who obtained those revenues; in the second it is excessive. Now, there can be no doubt but that Clive in his second administration had procured for the Company a revenue which would eventually be counted

* At the India Office he found a statue of himself, another of General Lawrence, and a third of Sir G. Pocock, larger than life, which had been executed in his absence.

by millions. In private the Court admitted this; but they declined to publish their opinion lest the too eager rapacity of the proprietors should be thereby excited. Their disinclination was a result of the system which placed the affairs of a distant empire in the hands of a joint-stock company. It did not the less annoy and alienate Clive, who believed that by their action he was made to pose as the receiver of a reward out of all proportion to the revenues from which it was paid.

It is much to be regretted that on his return to England Clive did not, for a time at all events, withdraw altogether from public affairs. The mental contest he had waged during the period immediately preceding has been graphically described by Sir John Malcolm: "For three years his mind had been kept painfully on the stretch. He had been compelled, almost singly, to combat a whole settlement, and especially the highest portion of it, in arms against him, eager to thwart and defeat his plan of reform; he had borne the whole weight of the resentment of the officers of the army, whom he subdued by his force of mind and unrivalled reputation; he had paid off a large portion of the Company's debt, had added an immense sum to their revenue, and had supplied them with an unparalleled investment; he had left their possessions in the East, as he believed, rich and flourishing and in peace, and had returned with ruined health and broken constitution. In all his trials, and in very painful circumstances, under which most men would have sunk, he had supported himself by the

strong consciousness that he was doing his duty, and meriting the applause of his own employers and of the world. It is not surprising that when he thought himself deserted, and believed he was the object of the jealousy and slight of the very persons he had so illustriously served, his disappointment and resentment should be extreme, and that his sensitive and exasperated mind should almost doubt the existence of human gratitude." A mind strained to the point of being almost unhinged by unintermittent trial is unfit, for the moment, to grapple with the rude realities of the world. And certainly those which Lord Clive encountered on his return were rude enough to have tested the soundest mental organisation. For him, invalided, worn out, nervous, unhinged, the immediate contest could have but one result. He might defeat his enemies, but the struggle would cost him his life.

The storm which, at a later period, burst over his head, nursed alike by the corrupt peculators whom he had exposed, by the popular fancy existing of the idea of the wealth he was said to have acquired by robbery and fraud, and, it must he added, by his own ostentatious display, has been painted in striking language by the late Lord Macaulay.

After describing the effect produced by his ostentatious magnificence, the eloquent historian continues: "But this was not the worst. Black stories, of which the greater part were pure inventions, were circulated touching his conduct in the East. He had to bear the whole odium, not only of those bad acts to which he had once or twice stooped, but of all the bad acts

of all the English in India, of bad acts committed when he was absent, nay, of bad acts which he had manfully opposed and severely punished. The very abuses against which he had waged an honest, resolute, and successful war, were laid to his account. He was, in fact, regarded as the personification of all the vices and weaknesses which the public, with or without reason, ascribed to the English adventurers in Asia. We have ourselves heard old men, who knew nothing of his history, but who still retained the prejudices conceived in their youth, talk of him as an incarnate fiend. Johnson always held this language. Brown, whom Clive employed to lay out his pleasure grounds, was enraged to see in the house of his noble employer a chest which had once been filled with gold from the treasury of Murshidábád, and could not understand how the conscience of the criminal could suffer him to sleep with such an object so near to his bed-chamber. The peasantry of Surrey looked with mysterious horror on the stately house which was rising at Claremont, and whispered that the great wicked lord had ordered the walls to be made so thick in order to keep out the devil who would one day carry him away bodily."

Such was the storm which brought to an untimely grave the man who had laid the foundation of our Indian Empire. It did not burst suddenly. Its advent was gradual. Clive, who had scented it on his arrival, thought he had conjured it away when, after having made arrangements for the return of himself and six of his relatives and friends to Parliament at the

general election, which was to take place the following year, he set out (January 1768) with Lady Clive and a small party to visit Paris and the south of France. Certainly, at that period, he had still confidence in himself, confidence in the future. No vision of general unpopularity crossed his mind. He spoke and wrote like a strong man, suffering from overwork, but conscious that rest would enable him to return stronger than before; strong enough to support the directors, who, without his aid, must fall;* strong enough, in a word, to impress his policy on the India Office and on the country.

Well would it have been for Clive if he had listened to the advice of his physicians, and passed a whole year in rest and relaxation on the Continent. The stay of nearly eight months which he made there benefited him greatly, so much, indeed, that he believed his health completely restored. Not so his medical advisers. They urged him in the month of August to stay through the autumn and the coming winter. He would not. He panted for the strife of parties, for the influence, the power, the consideration,

* "With regard to the Court of Directors," he wrote (19th January 1768) to a friend at Madras, "I can only say they are universally despised and hated; will certainly be pushed hard next April, and, if I and my friends do not support them, must fall. Their ignorance and obstinacy are beyond conception." Again, on the 9th February of the same year, writing to Mr. Verelst, he says: "Let me tell you, in secret, that I have the King's command to lay before him my ideas of the Company's affairs both at home and abroad, with a promise of his countenance and protection in everything I might attempt for the good of the nation and the Company."

which pre-eminence in such strife gives to a really capable man. He felt within him the ability, and he longed to put it in action. He would not wait, then, till the cure of his malady had been entirely effected, but returned prematurely to England.

During his absence he, and the six relatives and friends whom he had nominated,* had been returned to Parliament. Shortly afterwards he took his seat in that then august assembly as a supporter of Mr. Grenville.

The growing personal opposition to Lord Clive amongst the proprietors of East India Stock made itself very sensibly felt after his return from the continent. It is true the stings were the stings of gnats, but they were envenomed and unceasing. Had his health been good, Clive would have pushed them contemptuously aside. But, still irritable from acute nervous tension, he could not bear them with patience. It required all the exertions of his friends to prevent him from descending into the arena to answer a pamphlet written by Sir Robert Fletcher!

A few months later an event occurred which produed a marked effect upon his parliamentary, and an effect even greater upon his personal, career. In November 1770 the leader to whom Clive had attached himself in the House of Commons, George Grenville, died. The party which he had led, and which his

* Lord Clive was returned for Shrewsbury; Richard Clive for Montgomery; William and George Clive for Bishop's Castle; John Walsh for Worcester; Henry Strachey for Pontefract; Edmund Maskelyne for Crickdale.

influence had kept together, almost immediately dissolved. Some of its members, amongst them its leading lawyer, Mr. Wedderburn, a staunch friend of Clive, joined the ministry of which Lord North in the January immediately preceding had become the head. Others joined the opposition, led by Lord Rockingham. It would have been well for Clive if he and his friends had, at this conjuncture, taken a decided part. To remain the head of a "Clive party" numbering seven or eight, was to insure worse than isolation; it was to court the hostility of the two great parties which divided the House. Vulnerable as he was, exposed to violent attacks from men whom he knew to be unscrupulous and thirsting for revenge, he deliberately left himself—to use a phrase which as a soldier he would have understood—in the air, not only without support, but liable to be crushed by an overwhelming superiority of numbers. His apologist, Sir John Malcolm, has accounted for this political blunder by imagining that possibly Clive wished, before definitively making up his mind, to ascertain the line which each party was disposed to take on Indian affairs. The reason, applied to the conduct of such a man as Clive, will not stand the test of examination. If Clive could not have dictated the Indian policy of the party to which he might have heartily allied himself, he could at least have greatly influenced it!

There are some indications just prior to this period that his mind had lost the elasticity, the hope in the future, the resolute confidence, which had characterised

him in all the great crises of his life. It may have been one of the consequences of the loss of power. A greatly gifted man who has wielded absolute authority, is seldom able to school himself to take a great part in a parliamentary system. The Marquess Wellesley, splendid administrator as he was, proved himself, after his return from India, an impossible cabinet minister. He dictated to his colleagues in Downing Street as he had dictated to his Council in India. The same might with truth be said of the late Earl of Ellenborough. Both these statesmen had greatly governed. They could not divest themselves of the sense of greatness which their position had inspired and fall back into the routine of clerkdom. The alternative system of donning the garb of the agitator had not, fortunately, been invented in their days. After some futile attempts to accommodate themselves to constitutional governments, they took refuge in isolation. A giant in isolation feels no sympathy with the policy of dwarfs!

In this manner only is it possible to explain the feelings of Clive at this period. Shut out from the exercise of supreme power, he could not lend himself to serve a party whose policy seemed to him petty, undecided, and inadequate. Thence it was that he lost gradually that hope in the future of the country which is the sustaining power of the practical politician. Even a year prior to Mr. Grenville's death this feeling was beginning to creep over him. His correspondence at this period proves that he was fast losing faith in the ability of the mother country to retain

her colonies and foreign possessions; that he beheld with dismay the strides towards independence taken by North America and Ireland, and that he doubted even of India.

Meanwhile affairs in India were not progressing satisfactorily. The monetary returns were poor; a war with Haidar Alí in southern India was shaking English power there to its foundation; whilst in the India Office the enemies of Clive were gaining with every annual election new power and new influence. In 1769 it required the utmost exertion on the part of Lord Clive to prevent the nomination of Mr. Vansittart, formerly his friend, but since become his implacable enemy, to the post of Governor-General. By constituting a council of supervisors and by causing to be associated with Vansittart two of his own devoted friends, the Colonel Forde of Machhlípatanam and Biderra, and Mr. Scrafton, he had minimised this evil. The "Aurora" frigate which conveyed these gentlemen to India having been lost with all on board, the government of the Presidency was then, on the recommendation of Lord Clive, conferred (1771) upon a man who as an administrator at least equalled himself, and who became subsequently even more obnoxious to an influential parliamentary party—the gifted but unfortunate Warren Hastings.

The unrest of Lord Clive's mind at this period is demonstrated by the wish, expressed in all his correspondence, to retire from a scene in which "anarchy and confusion" appeared to him to ride rampant; and by his clinging, notwithstanding, to the skirts of the

political world. He expresses his determination to retire from Parliament, and yet remains in it; he records his sense of the weakness of the politicians and the inefficiency of their measures; yet occasionally there peeps out the longing of the man, who had been the "master of millions," to dictate his own policy. This is apparent in the eagerness with which, in May 1771, he welcomed a request made to him by Mr. Wedderburn to confer with Lord Rochford, one of the principal secretaries of State, regarding the affairs of India. This request led to communications with the Prime Minister, Lord North.

This apparent abandonment of the isolated position which he had till then retained, alarmed the party which had then the upper hand in the India Office, and which was composed of and supported by the bitter personal enemies of Lord Clive, and they resolved without delay to strike the blow which they had carefully prepared. Just a fortnight before the Parliament of that year (1772) was to meet, they transmitted to Clive an official letter informing him that papers had reached the Court of Directors in which he (Lord Clive) was charged with having been a party to the mismanagement of the Company's affairs in Bengal; and that if he had any observations to make upon such papers, copies of which were transmitted, the Court would be happy to receive the same as expeditiously as might suit his convenience. Lord Clive, scenting the coming storm, replied in a short and dignified letter, addressed to the Court of Directors. In that letter he referred to the records

of the Company, "where the whole of my conduct is stated," for a sufficient confutation of the charges transmitted to him. In conclusion he expressed his supposition that, if any part of his conduct had been injurious to the service, contradictory to his arrangements with the Company, or even mysterious to the Court, four years and a half since his arrival in England would not have elapsed before the Court's duty would have impelled it to call him to account. This letter received no reply.

A fortnight later, Parliament met (22nd January). A paragraph in the speech from the Throne indicated the intention of the Ministry to introduce a measure "to provide new laws" "for supplying defects or remedying abuses" in the administration of India. Clive had always advocated the introduction of such new laws, and he might well imagine that his recent correspondence with the Prime Minister had instigated the measure. He was disabused of this idea when, on the 30th March following, his bitter enemy Mr. Sulivan, who, besides being Deputy Chairman of the Court, was likewise a member of the House of Commons, rose in his place, and introduced a bill "for the better regulation of the affairs of the East India Company and of their servants in India, and for the due administration of justice in Bengal." The reforms proposed by this bill were for the most part of a very useful character. For many of them Lord Clive himself had incessantly contended. But in the speech which accompanied the introduction of the measure, Lord Clive could not fail to read an

impeachment of himself before the great council of the nation. In that speech Mr. Sulivan earnestly contended that the admitted evils of the past were due to the little power possessed by the Court of Directors to punish their servants in India; and that many of them were traceable to the conduct of former governors. The speech, whilst dealing in generalities, was skilfully constructed so as to direct the attention of the House to the principal events of Lord Clive's administrations.

Lord Clive replied. He began by stating that he stood virtually charged with having been the cause of the present melancholy state of affairs in Bengal; that as long as that impression remained his opinion on the matter before the House could produce no effect; that he should set himself therefore to remove it. He then entered into an elaborate defence of his second administration; pointed out the real evils which he had encountered and crushed; that it was the vermin who had been removed from the Augean stable, which he had cleansed, who had occasioned the public papers to teem with scurrility and abuse against him ever since his return to England; he then met the individual charges one after another; proved conclusively that in that second administration he had had regard only to the honour of his country and the true interests of the Company; that he had been guilty of no acts of oppression, unless the bringing of offenders to justice might be deemed such; that he had not suffered those under him to commit acts of violence, oppression, or extortion;

that his influence had always been exerted on the side of right and justice; and that he had returned to England a poorer man than when he had left it. His defence was, in fact, complete; and had he, on concluding it, at once resumed his seat, it is probable that the impression he had made would have prevented the resuscitation of charges which the House clearly saw were utterly devoid of foundation.

But, great general as he was in the field, Clive possessed neither the experience nor the tact which are often the most powerful weapons of a Parliamentary orator. He made a mistake on this occasion, from the commission of which on the field of battle he would have effectually restrained himself. Like Prince Rupert, he was not content with routing the enemy, he galloped so far in their pursuit that on his return he found that the victory had been snatched from his grasp. The conduct of the India Office and, to a lesser extent, the conduct of the Ministry, had embittered the last three years of his existence. He had stored up in his mind all the sins of omission and commission of his professing friends in power, and he was longing for an opportunity to fling their delinquencies at their heads. Such an opportunity had now arrived. He saw that in the successful vindication he had made of his own conduct he had gained the ear of the House; that the members were in the humour to listen to him. The temptation was too great to be withstood.

Receiving, in response to the expression of a fear that he should weary the House were he to proceed

further, sympathising encouragement to go on, Clive dashed at once into his charges against the Court of Directors. The abuses in India he traced to the policy which, by withholding from the servants of the Company adequate salaries, had exposed them to temptations which it was impossible for human nature to resist. He dwelt then in impassioned terms on the notorious misconduct of the Directors, on their ignorance of India, on the manner in which their maladministration had caused, and was causing, the destruction of the inland trade of Bengal; and he denounced the constitution of a Court which, elected annually, was at the mercy of a court of proprietors, the interest of whom in India consisted entirely in the punctual receipt of large dividends on East India stock.

Having by this attack made an enemy of every proprietor of East India stock in the House of Commons, Clive did not spare the Government. He denounced its members for the neglect with which they were treating a most important dependency of the Crown by leaving it to be administered without proper supervision by such a body as the Court of Directors: "If the administration had done their duty, we should not now have had a speech from the the Throne intimating the necessity of Parliamentary interposition to save our possessions in India from impending ruin."

Such was the speech. Able as it was, and true as were its arguments, it weakened rather than strengthened the position of the speaker. Ministers

of the Crown like to consider themselves infallible. They resent open attacks upon their shortcomings. It was truly remarked by the best friends of Lord Clive that "he had never spoken with greater eloquence, never with a more evil tendency as regarded himself."*

From that evening may be dated the extremely bitter persecution to which Lord Clive was subjected; the growing unpopularity so eloquently described by Lord Macaulay,† the unjustifiable attacks upon him for conduct of which he not only had not been guilty, but which he had repressed and condemned in others. These attacks, pressed on a man whose nature was becoming daily more sensitive, and whose constitution was rapidly failing, caused him infinite torture. He bore himself bravely, however, under the trial, and to the last boldly confronted his foes.

When the bill was laid upon the table of the House (30th April) Colonel Burgoyne moved the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into the nature, state, and condition of the East India Company and of the British affairs in the East Indies. The motion was carried, and the thirty-one members were appointed. Amongst these were Lord Clive and his friend Mr. Strachey, and Governor Johnstone, the brother of the Johnstone who had been the principal factor in negotiating the sale of the Súbahdárí on the death of Mír J'afar. The nomination of this Committee caused Mr. Sulivan's bill to be dropped.

* Gleig's *Life of Lord Clive.*
† Page 448–9.

The Committee began its labours by directing, on the motion of Governor Johnstone, an inquiry into the conduct of individuals who, whether in the civil or military service of the Company, had amassed great wealth in India. This inquiry, unanimously agreed to, virtually placed Lord Clive upon his trial.

In the examination to which Lord Clive and other witnesses were subject before this Committee, the connection of the former with Bengal from the beginning of 1757 to the close of 1760, and again from 1765 to 1767, was rigidly scrutinised. The negotiations with Siráju'd daulah, the affair of Amíchand, the presents received from Mír J'afar, the grant of the jaghír, the legacy, the regulations regarding trade, and every matter bearing more or less directly upon these main headings, were brought up, virtually as criminal charges. The prosecution, for so it was except in name, was conducted with all the ability which the concentrated hatred of the enemies of the intended victim could command. Lord Clive himself was subjected to a cross-examination of a most minute and searching character. He was questioned not merely as to what he had done, but as to the motives which prompted his action, the ends at which he had been aiming; whilst his enemies endeavoured directly, and, when a direct purpose could under no circumstances be imagined, by insinuation, to prove that in everything he had been actuated by corrupt or selfish motives. His very accusers sat in judgment upon him, for the hostile sentiments of almost every member of the Committee were not concealed.

In these trying circumstances Lord Clive displayed a dignity and a resolution that could not fail to command respect. His bearing was the bearing of a proud man, standing on his right, assailed by men whom he had righteously baffled. He admitted and justified all that he had done. His treatment of Amíchand and his attaching of Admiral Watson's name to the treaty were necessitated, he argued, by the state of affairs. He believed that Mr. Lushington had been authorised by the Admiral to sanction the signature of his name. Under similar circumstances he would act similarly. He admitted the receipt of enormous sums from Mír J'afar, but protested that no obligation of morality or public faith had been thereby violated. Having become, by the victory of Plassey, the arbiter of the situation, with a prince dependent upon his pleasure, an opulent city at his feet, its greatest bankers contending for his smiles, he himself walking through vaults, piled on either hand with gold and jewels, thrown open to him alone, "I stand at this moment," he exclaimed, "astonished at my own moderation!"

At last the Committee made its reports. The first report contained the evidence taken regarding the first administration of Lord Clive; the second referred to the causes which led to the war with Mír Kásim under his successor. These reports were presented to Parliament on the 26th May, printed, and circulated throughout the kingdom in the hope that the feeling they would create against Clive would lead to his inevitable disgrace. But the

enemies of Clive had acted like the ostrich. It is true that the publication of the reports did influence the mind against Clive and against others who had taken money from native princes, but it told with far greater effect against the authors of the prosecution, the Court of Directors and their friends. It convicted them not only of misgovernment, but of an inaptitude for affairs, an ignorance, and a want of grasp which ruined them in the minds of all intelligent observers.

Amongst a large class, indeed, Clive did not suffer by the publication of his evidence. His manly bearing, his self-assertion, his very admissions conciliated their esteem. Nothing had been proved against him which he had not previously avowed. The miscarriage, then, of the clique which had whispered the certainty of disclosures more fatal to his fame as an honest man than any of which the world had been cognisant, produced an effect the reverse of that which his enemies had hoped for. The King took the lead in the manifestation of this change of intelligent public feeling in his favour. Three weeks after the reports of the Committee had been laid upon the table of the House of Commons Clive was nominated and installed as a Knight of the Bath. The Prime Minister, Lord North, and the Secretary of State, Lord Rochfort, seemed to follow in the same direction. The Lord-Lieutenancy of the county of Salop having fallen vacant, Lord Rochfort, with the approval of the Prime Minister, caused it to be intimated to Clive that if the office were agreeable to him they would have

pleasure in submitting his name to the King. The result was that on the 9th October Clive kissed hands for the Lieutenancy of Salop, and in the December following for that of Montgomeryshire.

These civilities renewed the friendly relations of Clive with the Cabinet, and in the winter of that year he drew up and submitted to it the outlines of a measure which had for its object a complete reform in the home-administration of India and the transfer of the territorial sovereignty to the Crown.

But his enemies, though baffled, were not yet beaten. What their action was will be presently related. To the right understanding of it I must first show how the proceedings of the House of Commons tended to give them the opportunity they desired.

When the session of 1773 opened, the Select Committee, of which Colonel Burgoyne was Chairman, resumed its labours. But Lord North at the same time asked and obtained the appointment of a Committee of Secrecy, to be composed of thirteen members, with power to examine the books of the Company and to report to the House upon the state of debts and credits set forth therein, as well as on the system of management generally. The Committee was further directed to state whether or not, in their judgment, the Court of Directors should be allowed to act as, in their despair, they had proposed to act; viz. to send six gentlemen to India to supervise their affairs in that country.

Then was presented the remarkable circumstance

of two committees sitting at the same time, the animus of one being directed to compass the ruin of Lord Clive; the animus of the other being the destruction of the East India Company. The double inquisition resulted, as might have been expected, in a fiasco. The Select Committee proved numberless instances of corrupt reception of money from native chieftains; the Secret Committee convicted the Company of the grossest mismanagement. Despairing of untying, without a labour for which he was constitutionally unfitted, the Gordian knot, Lord North made over the papers of both committees to his attorney-general, Sir John Thurlow, who undertook to devote the Easter recess to examining them, and to make a proposition afterwards. He was true to his word. On the close of the Easter holidays he attended a meeting of the Cabinet summoned specially for the purpose, and informed its members that he had found the affairs of the Company to be so involved, alike from the misconduct of their servants and their own mal-administration, that he could see no alternative but to pass through Parliament a measure which should confiscate to the public all the sums acquired by the servants of the Crown and of the Company in India, under the denomination of presents from Indian princes, on the plea that inasmuch as those presents had been obtained by the military force of the country, they belonged properly to the State. The proposal was, as might have been expected, ill-received by many members of the Ministry, and the Cabinet broke up without coming to a decision.

It was, nevertheless, this proposition of Sir John Thurlow's which formed the basis of the new attack against Lord Clive. After the re-assembly of Parliament, Burgoyne, Sulivan, and their friends had resumed attacks which Clive had no difficulty in repulsing—with loss to his accusers. But on the 10th May, Colonel Burgoyne, who a month previously had brought up the third and fourth reports of his committee, and who, in the interval, had been informed of Thurlow's proposal, made his grand demonstration. This took the form of three resolutions, which he proposed to the House to pass. These resolutions ran thus:—First, "that all acquisitions made under the influence of a military force, or by treaty with foreign princes, did of right belong to the State." Secondly, "that to appropriate acquisitions so made to the private emolument of persons entrusted with any civil or military power of the State is illegal." Thirdly, "that very great sums of money, and other valuable property, had been acquired in Bengal from princes and others of that country by persons entrusted with the civil and military powers of the State by means of such powers; which sums of money and valuable property have been appropriated to the private use of such persons."

It would have been difficult to make charges more direct against Lord Clive: Every line in the resolutions pointed at him. If doubt had been possible, Colonel Burgoyne took care to dispel every shadow of it in his speech introducing the resolutions. In that speech all the delinquencies, real

and imaginary, of the victor of Plassey, were emphasised with a bitterness not to be surpassed. Tracing all the misfortunes which had befallen the Company to the treasonable compact which deposed Siráju'd daulah and placed Mír J'afar on his seat, and condemning the "black perfidy" which alone had rendered such a policy possible, Burgoyne denounced the treatment of Amíchand, the forging of the name of Admiral Watson; the subsequent agreement with Mír J'afar which had procured enormous sums, extorted, he said, by military force, under the guise of presents, to the leading servants of the Company in Bengal. The proceedings of the second administration were dealt with in the same bitter and unsparing manner. Before he sat down the orator declared to the House that if the resolutions should meet with their approbation he would not stop there, but would follow them up with others, his object being to compel those who had acquired sums of money in the manner he had stated to make a full and complete restitution.

I pass over the speeches in support of and in opposition to the resolutions, to notice that delivered by Lord Clive. Sketching at some length his own career, especially that part of it under the review of the House, Clive claimed a title to the gratitude of his country. The rewards and honours he had received he balanced against the services he had rendered. To be exposed to calumny and slander was always the lot of a man who had rooted out abuses. The throne itself had not been free from

similar attacks. If such charges were encouraged in high places able men would be disinclined to take upon themselves posts of responsibility and danger. He then replied once again to Burgoyne's charges; defended the legality of accepting presents under the circumstances of the time; and concluded by declaring that if the record of his services at the India Office, if the defence twice made in that House, if the approbation he had already met with, did not constitute an answer to the attack made upon him, he could make no other.

The resolutions were, however, carried. Burgoyne then proceeded to fulfil the promise he had made to follow them up. On the 17th May he brought forward the following resolutions: "That it appears to this House that the Right Honourable Robert Lord Clive, Baron of Plassey, in the kingdom of Ireland, about the time of the deposition of Siráju'd daulah, and the establishment of Mír J'afar on the masnad, through the influence of the powers with which he was entrusted as member of the Select Committee and Commander-in-Chief of the British Forces, did obtain and possess himself of two lakhs of rupees as Commander-in-Chief, a further sum of two lakhs and eighty thousand rupees as member of the Select Committee, and a further sum of sixteen lakhs or more, under the denomination of a private donation; which sums, amounting together to twenty lakhs and eighty thousand rupees, were of value, in English money, of two hundred and thirty-four thousand pounds; and that in so doing the said Robert Clive

abused the power with which he was entrusted, to the evil example of the servants of the public, and to the dishonour and detriment of the State."

In his speech in support of this resolution, Burgoyne went over the same ground he had traversed in his previous oration, and he concluded by begging the House to put aside all partiality and prejudice; to sanction an act of national justice; "to imitate the first example of antiquity, and strike, like Manlius, when the justice of the State requires it."

Clive replied in the most tactical speech he had ever delivered. He first recapitulated his services, and invited attention to the fact that the India Office and the Crown, being in possession of the general tenor of the circumstances upon which his accuser had dwelt, had repeatedly thanked him for those services; he then exposed the interested and revengeful motives of the men who had instigated the attack, sparing not even those in high places, who, from various causes had allowed themselves to sanction it; turning from that subject, he asked prominent attention to the fact that the India Office, now his accuser, had almost forced him to proceed for a second time to Bengal, and had expressed a deep regret that his health had not allowed him to stay there longer. "After certificates such as these, Sir," he concluded, "am I to be brought here like a criminal, and the very best parts of my conduct construed into crimes against the State?"

Stating that the resolution, if carried, would confiscate all he possessed in the world except his paternal fortune of five hundred pounds a year, he continued:

"But on this I am content to live; and, perhaps, I shall find more real content of mind and happiness than in the trembling affluence of an unsettled fortune. But, Sir, I must make one more observation. If the definition of the honourable gentleman (Colonel Burgoyne) and of this House, that the State, as expressed in these resolutions, is, *quoad hoc*, the Company, then, Sir, every farthing I enjoy is granted to me. But to be called upon, after sixteen years have elapsed, to account for my conduct in this manner, and, after an uninterrupted enjoyment of my property, to be questioned, and considered as obtaining it unwarrantably, is hard indeed; it is a treatment I should not think the British Senate capable of. But if such should be the case, I have a conscious innocence within me that tells me my conduct is irreproachable. *Frangas, non flectes.* My enemies may take from me what I have; they may, as they think, make me poor, but I will be happy. I mean not this as my defence, though I have done for the present. My defence will be heard at that bar; but, before I sit down, I have one request to make to the House,—that when they come to decide upon my honour they will not forget their own."

After some further discussion the consideration of the motion was adjourned, and it was ordered that evidence should be heard at the bar. On the 21st May a few witnesses were examined, and Lord Clive's evidence given before the Select Committee was read. The debate on the original motion was then resumed by Mr. Stanley, who proposed to omit

from it the words more directly inculpating the honour of Clive.* Mr. Fuller, who seconded the amendment, carried its intention even further by proposing to strike out the sentence which suggested that the action referred to in the original motion was the consequence of undue influence.† The amendment in its more comprehensive form was debated with great warmth. Clive laboured under the disadvantage of counting amongst his opponents the Prime Minister, the careless and indolent Lord North, the Attorney General, and many of those whose votes were dependent on the action of the Minister. He had against him, likewise, all the influence of the India Office, and of the holders of East India Stock. He was not himself present during the critical part of the debate. He had left the House in an early part of the evening, after having made an impassioned appeal to the House to take, if they would, his fortune, but to leave his honour intact. In his absence his case was managed by the Solicitor General, Wedderburn, afterwards Lord Loughborough. After a protracted debate the House proceeded to a division. The numbers were one hundred and fifty-five in favour of the amendment, ninety-five against it. This division stripped Burgoyne's motion of all its

* "And in so doing, the said Robert Lord Clive abused the powers with which he was intrusted to the evil example of the servants of the public, and to the dishonour and detriment of the State."

† "Through the influence of the powers with which he was entrusted, as a member of the Select Committee, and Commander-in-Chief of the British forces."

rancour. It left it a base narration of facts which no one disputed.* Incensed to see the fruit of their labours vanish from their grasp, the opponents of Lord Clive made a desperate effort to restore the battle. One of the most influential amongst them rose, after the result of the division had been declared, and moved, "that Lord Clive did, in so doing, abuse the powers with which he was entrusted, to the evil example of the servants of the public."

The House had declared itself strongly in the preceding division against the introduction of any words which could be interpreted as affixing a stigma to the name of Clive, and it was not prepared to eat its own words at the dictation of a minority. After a brief discussion, the previous question was carried without a division. Finally, at 5 o'clock in the morning, the friends of Lord Clive succeeded in inducing the House to accept, by an unchallenged vote, a motion which brought the long contest to a close. The House passed the resolution: "That Robert, Lord Clive, did, at the same time, render great and meritorious services to his country."

* "That it appears to this House that the Right Honourable Robert, Lord Clive, Baron of Plassey in the Kingdom of Ireland, about the time of the deposition of Siráju'd daulah, and the succession of Mír J'afar on the masnad, did obtain and possess himself of two lakhs of rupees as Commander-in-Chief, a further sum of two lakhs and eighty thousand rupees as member of the Select Committee, and a further sum of sixteen lakhs or more, under the denomination of a private donation; which sums, amounting together to twenty lakhs and eighty thousand rupees, were of the value, in English money, of two hundred and thirty-four thousand pounds."

As long as the contest, so deeply affecting his character, had continued, Lord Clive had borne up against it with a manliness, a courage, and a fortitude worthy of all praise. It had been a heart-breaking effort for one who felt that he, and he alone, had given to his country an empire larger than the two islands which constitute the home of her children. But the strain had been too great for a mind which from its early days had been subject to prolonged fits of melancholy, and for a constitution which had been shattered not less by exposure and disease, than by the remedies which that disease had necessitated.* The mental relief caused by the excitement of the opposition was followed by a reaction almost permanent in its character. It is true that there were occasions when—to use the words of the brilliant essayist—"his genius flashed through the gloom." His condition, however, had passed almost beyond the region of hope. It was in vain that, immediately after the breaking up of Parliament he visited Bath; that, finding the waters of that place had lost their accustomed virtue, he then proceeded to the continent. By degrees correspondence with his numerous and attached friends, which had constituted one of his greatest resources in his trials and difficulties, became irksome to him. The increasingly acute pain caused by his bodily infirmities, especially by gall-stones, gradually but steadily worked an effect upon his

* To give relief to the pain which his maladies caused him, Clive had been forced to take increasing quantities of opium.

mental system. The travels abroad failed permanently to benefit him. After his return to England in 1774 the disease, working in two directions, continued to make progress. His mind had not the sustaining power which the consciousness that his great services were rightly appreciated by his fellow-countrymen would have given it. Far from that, the conviction that he was an object of hatred to many, and that his enemies, whom he knew to be as corrupt as they were unscrupulous, had the ear of the public, and had roused against him a mass of hatred and prejudice hardly to be surpassed, tended to sap the basis of the sustaining power which throughout the crisis had supported him. Little wonder, then, that under an acute paroxysm of intense pain, the mind, weakened and disappointed, gave way, or that, at such a moment, he should have been tempted to try the remedy which had failed him in his youth. He died by his own hand on the 22nd November 1774, just after he had completed his forty-ninth year.

# CHAPTER XX.

## Character.

The character of Lord Clive is an open book which all who run may read. He possessed, above all things, genius. But that genius, uncultivated in early youth, transferred in manhood to a stage in which the higher virtues knew no place, where successful speculation at first in trade, and afterwards in the larger scheme of territorial aggrandisement, at the expense of rivals less skilful or of a race physically inferior, was the end and aim of existence, never acquired that exquisite sensibility which a more refined training might have given it. Like the genius of Napoleon, it remained to the last as rough as when it was hewn from the rock of nature, and not only as rough, but as disfigured by the mire and the clay which were adhering to it at the beginning. It is possible that a training of a higher character, earlier surroundings of a loftier and more refined tone, might have purified it entirely. It is, I say, possible: it is by no means certain. Nature might have asserted herself to the very end.

But that genius was there, a genius at first undefined, impatient of control, striving to burst its bonds, is undeniable. In his boyhood it gave evidence of its existence by the fascination which its owner exercised over his companions. They obeyed without a murmur the orders of this untutored being who hated learning, and who protested in all his actions against the discipline of a school. One of his masters, and one only, had the wit to discover the latent germs, which, undeveloped, made this boy to differ so much from other boys. But even he failed to guide them. The moral nature of the lad remained, during the entire period of school training, absolutely untouched by the discipline of his masters. It emerged from school-training as crude, as raw, as unpolished, as at the beginning. Beyond the most elementary education, Clive had imbibed no instruction which could discipline his mind. He entered the world at the age of nineteen an unlettered savage, unfit, as his friends painfully acknowledged, as he himself felt, to enrol himself in any of the professions open to a man of his position, qualified only by the power he felt within him for a life of adventure.

He went to India. For the first time he writhed under the restraints of real discipline. In a climate in which, for eight months in the year, out-door pursuits except in the very early morning or in the evening are forbidden, he was forced to apply himself to sedentary occupations as uninteresting as they were distasteful. He no longer possessed there the resources which, at school, had enabled him to

glide lightly through the hours of nominal labour. He had no congenial friends, no admiring comrades, with whom to plan, during those hours, the daring projects to be executed as soon as they should be free. Forced into communion with himself he found still no resources. He wanted action, and there was no action. Nor did the atmosphere around him contribute to alleviate the gloom induced by this introspection. From morning to night and from night to morning but one idea irradiated the scene. That idea was how, by private trade, sufficient money might be accumulated to enable each man entitled to trade privately to return with a fortune to his native land. And was it for this that he had come to India? Was it that, after years of drudgery in a bad climate, he might accumulate an income sufficient to enable him to live in the country he had quitted because he panted for the action which in it was denied him? The thought was intolerable. We can scarcely wonder that the despair produced by a contemplation of the only possible future before him drove him to attempt his existence. What was life to him, if life was to be drudgery to end only in vacuity?

Suddenly the scene changed. Action, after all, had become possible in India. The aggression of the French drove Clive and his co-patriots from Madras to Fort St. David. There he took part in the defence of that place against the attacks directed against it by Dupleix. A world gradually opened out to him in which he felt qualified to play a part. He recognised intuitively his fitness for the new situa-

tion. The instincts of his boyhood, the instincts which had commanded the obedience of his fellows, returned to him as fresh and as strong as they had been in those early days. Only, here, he was under restrictions: he was shut out from command: he was simply a volunteer, prevented even from offering suggestions or from criticising audibly the operations of others.

The new world had, then, its drawbacks. Genius had found action, it is true, but it was not the spontaneous action which is the fruit of its own vivid inspiration. Imagine Napoleon under the command of Cartaux!* We see there Clive under Gingen! The situation was too intolerable.

Genius revolted! With the miserable generalship which had forced Gingen to flee before d'Auteuil from Valkonda, Clive would have nought to do. Whatever might be the risk, he would speak out. Careless, then, of consequences; eager only to show how it might still be possible to remedy the evil; Clive returned to Fort St. David and communicated with Governor Saunders. Half convinced, but still somewhat distrusting the critic who was not a professional critic, Saunders subjected Clive to new proofs. When these had been satisfactorily given, he transferred him to the military service, and sent him to examine the city beleaguered by the French, and the fall of which would be fatal to the interests of which he had charge. Clive went, saw, and

* One of the incapable Generals under whom Bonaparte served before Toulon.

reported. The clear nature of his reports, the decided character of his recommendations, completed the influence he had gained over Saunders. Thenceforward every trammel was removed.

At last genius was unfettered. The result was seen at Arkát, at Kávéripák, at Trichinápalli. The military conduct of Clive at those places, alike in protracted defence and in brilliant attack, his masterly combinations, his coolness and daring in danger, under surprise, his quick eye to seize every point of the situation, entitle him to a place amongst great captains. If he made a mistake, he repaired it so completely as to cause the enemy to regret that they had endeavoured to take advantage of it. But he made few mistakes. His conceptions were always brilliant, his plans were always masterly, his execution was always effective. In less than eighteen months he had conquered India south of the river Krishna—nominally for Muhammad Ali, really for his own countrymen.

Those months were the most brilliant of his life. They were the first in which he really lived. Existence previously had had so few charms for him that he would have been well content to let it go. But from the moment Saunders gave him leave to march on Arkát, he was born again. The gate to the world, wherein the ideas which overpowered him would have full and free scope, had been opened to him. He had action at last, action of his own creation, action the consequence of the conceptions of his own genius. Then he revelled in life, then he felt all

the buoyancy of existence, the entire correspondence between the brain and the will which makes a strong man irresistible. He lived in those months. The savage of Lostock and Market Drayton had at last found his sphere in which the distorted genius of those early days would develop itself. They were to him what 1796 was to Napoleon. Their effect was not very dissimilar. In the midst of all his triumphs Clive remained a savage still. Genius had asserted itself. The time and the opportunity had not yet arrived for nature!

In due course that time and that opportunity arrived. A visit to England had proved to Clive that his schoolboy instincts were right; that his untutored and undisciplined nature was not trained to mingle with satisfaction in the ordinary social life of England. Again he panted for action. Again did he proceed to India in search of it.

This time action came to seek him. The renown he had gained in Southern India indicated him as the fittest person to recover the lost prestige of the English in Bengal. He proceeded to Bengal, recaptured Calcutta, terrified the Núwáb who had condoned, if he did not sanction, the slaughter of our countrymen, into the signing of a treaty, the clauses of which he dictated; crushed, in the teeth of his remonstrances, the French settlement on the Huglí; and by these successes obtained for his countrymen a position in the fairest province of India far surpassing any which they had held before. He did not stop there. Partly—at the outset, I believe, entirely—because he

was under orders to return to Madras as soon as he should have restored order in Bengal, and he felt convinced that his departure would be the signal for the renewal of the attack which in the preceding year had been so fatal; partly—as time went on—because in the vacillating and impulsive nature of Siráju'd daulah he had detected the qualities which make their owner an easy prey:—he determined not to abandon his task until he had for ever rendered the Núwáb powerless for mischief. So far his proceedings, so far likewise the end and aim of his policy, need no justification. His open and avowed object being to make the English settlement in Bengal secure against an attack such as that which only a few months earlier had destroyed it, he was bound to take the measures which, in his honour and conscience, he believed to be necessary to attain that end. He knew well that it was his own name—the name of Clive—not the name of the English—which had become a terror to the Núwáb. That prince had driven the English without Clive from their hearths and homes in Calcutta; the English led by Clive had recovered those hearths and homes, had stormed his own town of Huglí, had captured the French settlement, and now threatened him. Every communication between the two had satisfied Clive that his was the name which had frightened the Núwáb, which stood prominently forward as the protector of English interests in Bengal. He was justified, therefore, in resolving, before he should quit Bengal, to render the Núwáb powerless for mischief.

It was only when he came to ponder over the measures he should adopt to carry out this aim that the heavy clay of his baser nature was manifested. The negotiations carried on by means of Amíchand with the wealthy bankers and the discontented nobles of Murshidábád gradually roused into action the passions which, for want of opportunity perhaps, had been dormant in this lower stratum. It can never be congenial to a lofty mind to urge a subordinate to use all his endeavours to induce the influential people with whom he comes in contact to betray their master. To bring himself to incite such a line of conduct was the first step made by Clive in the fatal path of mental degradation. The next step was infinitely more debasing. The negotiations with Amíchand and others at the Court of Murshidábád had given Clive a very exaggerated idea of the treasures at the disposal of the ruling prince. From the carrying out of a measure which should simply render the Núwáb powerless for mischief, his mind passed, then, at a bound, to a scheme which, whilst attaining that end, should at the same time enrich himself. The intelligence received from Murshidábád that there were two highly influential nobles bidding for his support to betray their master, nurtured this conception. Thenceforward it became a deliberate plan. From the moment it took possession of his mind every scruple vanished, the baser nature triumphed; the flaws in the stone which had till then shone out with so pure and bright a lustre became manifest to every observer.

The baser nature triumphed. Revelling in its triumph it caused its master to perpetrate deeds from which, before he had been tempted, Clive himself would have shrunk back with horror. The price to be paid to himself for the death of Siráju'd daulah—for in the East deposition means death—two hundred and thirty-four thousand pounds, was a great temptation to the man who, only thirteen years before, had landed in Madras a penniless and unfriended lad. It was a temptation so great, so absorbing, that to clutch at the amount the baser nature had no thought for the victim—the misguided boy still in his teens—who might yet, with opportunity, redeem the faults of his early training. One word from Clive could have ensured that his life, at least, should be spared; the baser nature would not allow him to speak that word. Was it to be expected that it should? It had already made of him the betrayer of the agent who had served him well, who had woven the plot which was to give him the wealth he coveted! Had he one single feeling of sympathy for the wretch whom his falseness drove to madness? He speaks of him throughout his correspondence as a miserable tool who was to be discarded because he had demanded too much, and the threatened betrayal by whom of the plot against Siráju'd daulah would have been fatal to his plans.

The very thought that when so close to accomplishment those plans might fail, that, through the action of one man he might be baulked of the fortune dangling before his eyes, roused the baser nature to

the committal of a deed which for ever stamps its perpetrator. It made of Clive a forger!

The deed accomplished, the price of treason paid, genius once more re-asserted itself. Not, however, the pure unalloyed genius of the Southern India days, genius revelling in its freedom from swathing bonds, genius able to execute the plans it had conceived. No; side by side with that genius stalked the baser nature, the nature which, having tasted, continued to cry "Give, give!" Thus having, by an insistance on the prompt payment of the price of treason, reduced the supplanter of Siráju'd dáulah to the position of a dependant, unable, without his aid, to maintain order amongst his subjects, still less to repel foreign invasion, Clive insisted that for every service rendered there should be a corresponding reward. Sometimes the reward took the shape of money paid to the general coffers, but the baser nature never forgot the interests of its owner. This was especially manifested by the transfer to Clive himself in 1759, as a personal gift, of the zamíndárí of the whole of the districts south of Calcutta, then rented by the Company, and valued at thirty thousand pounds a year. His desperate clinging to this fatal gift, following, as that gift did, other large appropriations, was the main cause of the contentions with the India Office which were a principal factor in the troubles of his later life!

For the second time Clive visited England. Again, in spite of his wealth, his fame, his services, he felt ill at ease in the social life of his native land.

Whispers regarding the means whereby his wealth had been acquired had preceded him. His title to the estates which brought him, by his own admission, twenty-seven thousand pounds a year, was questioned. If he was not then looked upon with the suspicion which all but overwhelmed him at a later period, his society was not courted. Command virtually irresponsible had given him a brusqueness of manner which did not conciliate, nor did the stern expression of a countenance never well-favoured prepossess men in his favour. His ambition, too, was thwarted. He failed to obtain a seat in the House of Commons, he quarrelled with the India Office; he recognised every day that his achievements in Bengal were appreciated far below their value. He was inwardly intensely relieved when he was suddenly invited to return to that Presidency, to restore there the order which had disappeared on his departure.

The disorder which had supervened on his departure from the provinces he had conquered is to be traced to himself. His successors had made of his example a principle, and had carried that principle into the transactions of every-day life. Following the lines which he had laid down, the Government of Bengal had twice during the four years of his absence sold to the highest bidder the Súbahdárí of the three provinces. A principle which governed the disposal of the highest office in the state had come very rapidly to be applied to every office. Free-trade licenses, the monopoly of certain grades of the Company's servants,

were sent likewise into the market. Justice was bought and sold. Honour, morality, virtue, the sense of right and wrong, had disappeared. The literature of the period, of which some exists still, proves that, from highest to lowest, corruption, and all the baser children of corruption, reigned supreme in the British settlements. So great was the scandal, that it forced even from Clive, on his return in 1765, the exclamation, "Alas! how is the English name sunk!" *

But, after all, the men he found in Bengal had simply applied to every department the example which Clive had given them when dealing with the highest. It was that fatal transaction with Mír J'afar, that sudden accumulation of wealth by the sale of the highest office in Bengal, which had stimulated the cupidity of every office-holder in the country. Granted that the overthrow of Siráju'd daulah, that the bargaining with Mír J'afar, had been necessary for the security of English interests in India, high morality required that the pecuniary advantages derived therefrom should be accumulated for the Company of which

* "If I were to dwell upon the situation of the Company's affairs in Bengal," he writes in another letter, "both civil and military, a volume would not be sufficient. The inhabitants of the country have been laid under contribution by both civil and military, their goods taken from them at an under-price, and presents of money have either been extorted from them, or given for interfering in the affairs of government by insisting on men of high employments being turned out, and others appointed in their room."

Clive was the servant, by the use of whose resources alone he had been able to carry out his part of the compact! But for the servants to take the kernel and leave the master the shell, for the servants to take the profit and charge the master with the cost—that was an example which, occurring in a country more than ten thousand miles distant from supervision, could not fail to be elevated into a principle.

Slight reason, then, had Clive, on his return to India in 1765, to be surprised at the universality of the application of the principle which he had inaugurated. But the Clive who returned to India in 1765, was not, to all outward appearance, the Clive who had quitted that country in 1760. The man who had filled his coffers by the disposal of a vice-regal throne; who, defending his conduct in after years, expressed surprise at his own moderation at that eventful period; who had not scrupled to accept from Mír J'afar, in return for services rendered to that prince as a servant of the Company, lands valued at thirty thousand pounds a year, and then rented by the Company, thus assuming the position of landlord to his masters—returned to India a hater of corruption, an ardent lover of all the virtues, a man determined, at all costs, to put down vice, to repress bribery, to make the taking of presents illegal—to cleanse, in a word, the Augæan stable, the existence of which his example in preceding years had made possible!

Clive's second administration in Bengal, regarded as

a detached work, merits the highest praise. Could he have obliterated all the details of the first administration, he would have descended to posterity with a crown of real glory encircling his brows. He was there the stern, just, thorough, resolute man, waging war against corruption and its kindred vices, eradicating the system which had made those vices possible, punishing the guilty, urging upon his masters a course of action which would have destroyed every excuse for dabbling in trade. All that he did he did thoroughly, completely, well. He could not make a perfect cure, because the one course which would have been effectual to that end—the placing on a proper footing of the salaries of public servants—was not permitted by his masters. But he did everything but that. He suppressed a mutiny—of which he likewise was the indirect author—with a firmness, a coolness, and a success which form an example to all ages. He conducted a political negotiation, which secured for the English possessions a solid frontier. He showed himself in all respects the virtuous, resolute, far-sighted reformer and statesman.

But who was he who thus, in little more than two years, roughly rooted out the evil system he found existing? It was the same man who had planted that system. Well might the corrupt councillors who, administering Bengal in the early part of 1765, had, before the arrival of Clive, sold, for their own profit, the Súbahdárí of the three provinces—well might they argue that of all men living he who was coming to sit

above them could find no fault with their proceedings; for had not he set them the example? And when he did come, when he did find fault, when he openly reproached them, was not their anger, was not their indignation, well founded? Almost any other man but this man, they argued, would have had the right to reprove them. But for one who had realised, by similar means, an enormous fortune; who, by virtue of the position acquired by such an accumulation, was now sent to rule over them; for such a man to prohibit actions in them which he never scrupled to commit himself—that was the veriest hypocrisy; that was the cant of the profligate who has outlived his powers; that was, in very deed, Satan reproving sin. This thought, undoubtedly, underlay the unpopularity of Clive during his second administration; it underlay the hostility after his return to England, which shortened his life. The rebukes which men could have borne, the reforms to which men would have submitted, from one whose hands were pure, they could not tolerate from a man who was revelling in wealth acquired by means which he denounced when put into action by others!

There was reason in this objection. Men will not stand to be lectured by a man who has profited by the vices which he denounces in them. The manner in which Clive had made his fortune ought to have prevented him, being the man he was, from returning to India. It would be a mistake to suppose that he returned thither a changed man. His nature had hardened, that was all. The clay had become as

solid as the crystal of which it now formed a part. He had never repented of the manner in which he had acquired his fortune. None of the actions which posterity has reprobated caused his conscience the smallest uneasiness. He justified every action—even to the forging of Admiral Watson's name and his treatment of Amíchand—to his friends, to himself, later on before Parliament. He had simply become hardened. He felt the stronger from his hardening. He even, if we may judge from his correspondence, felt most righteously indignant at the perpetration by others of the vices which had made his fortune. Who has not witnessed a father reproaching in his son the sins which he himself as a young man had committed? There we see Clive; the only difference being that, whilst the father had not profited from his youthful depravities, the fortune acquired by Clive stood against him and condemned him!

Whilst, therefore, it is impossible not to award the highest meed of praise to the second administration of Clive, our admiration must stop there. It cannot extend to the man himself. To have been consistent, Clive should have despoiled himself of the gains he had acquired by the means he was denouncing. He was not capable of this sacrifice. He was, then, as his enemies declared, in the position of Satan reproving sin.

He returned to England, to meet on landing the maledictions and the maledictory effects of the men whom he had denounced for corruption. They did not spare him. Every hour he was made to feel

their implacable resentment. The poisoned arrows discharged by them at his most vulnerable points were numerous enough "to darken the face of the sun." In the council chamber of the nation, in the baronial hall, in the drawing-room, in the hovel of the working man, the stories of the atrocities of this "bold bad man" were circulated and believed. Not one stratum of society was exempt from their influence. Literature, represented by Johnson, denounced him; the peasantry believed he had built the walls of his house so thick in order to keep out the devil. In the pulpit, on the stage, in the ante-chambers of the palace, in the coffee-rooms of Fleet Street and the Strand, the cry was still the same.

Clive bore up against the hue and cry, which would have overwhelmed a lesser man, with the same manly and daring courage which had already carried him through so many dangers. Not for an instant would he bow his head to the storm. Proudly he confronted his enemies, admitted the deeds they imputed to him, justified them, claimed credit even for moderation, and then, turning on those who had hounded on every class of society to persecute him, denounced them with unmeasured scorn. He, at least, had rendered services which had added provinces equal in extent to a European kingdom to the Empire; never had so large a territory been gained at so small an outlay; his actions, now imputed to him as crimes, had been condoned by his masters. But for those who brought these charges! It was they who, by making

of a special act performed under extraordinary circumstances a precedent, and exaggerating that precedent until it had taken the shape of an immoral and unjustifiable principle, had imperilled the British hold on the provinces he had conquered, and brought the British name into disrepute. It was because he had baffled their cupidity and foiled their schemes that they now accused him before his countrymen, that they attempted to make him the author of the evils which, in effect, he had remedied.

The defence of Clive against the secret inuendoes, the exaggerations, the spoken and whispered calumnies by which he had been assailed, was, in fact, complete. The open charges he never, I repeat, attempted to deny. He justified alike his treatment of Amíchand, the use which he had made of the name of Watson, his appropriation of the two hundred and thirty-four thousand pounds which the victory of Plassey had gained for him. But the under-current of public feeling was too strong to be turned by such a defence as his. Calumny had done its work too completely. With the great mass of mankind the admission of the major premiss, an admission compulsory because so easy of demonstration, stood forward as a proof that the minor premiss, which might be denied because not capable of being brought clearly home, must be true also. On the public, then, on society, the defence of Clive fell as the spear hurled by Priam fell on the armour of Achilles. Even in the House of Commons, though he was able to avert a hostile verdict, his friends deemed it unwise to

propose an approval of the conduct which had been impugned. The sums he had accepted to compass the dethronement of Siráju'd daulah were recorded; the House refused, by accepting the previous question, to come to a decision as to whether his acceptance of those sums was worthy of condemnation; and he was declared to have rendered great and meritorious services to his country. All that the House of Commons did was to affirm a truism. It shrank from passing an opinion. The verdict was tantamount to a lenient censure!

Clive did not long survive this contest. The bitter struggle had told on a constitution enfeebled by disease. The mind which had been sustained by the excitement of the contest, could not bear the silence of the reaction. And such a reaction! What had he now to live for, this man who had been the arbiter of the fate of millions? All that would have made the evening of life enjoyable—

> That which should accompany old age,
> As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
> He must not look to have.

He had them not. He felt that he was hated, that in the eyes of the multitude he was a cruel tyrant who had despoiled the poor to enrich himself. He was shut out even, it seemed to him, from employment. The burden of living, even at the age of forty-nine, was, under such circumstances, too great.

And yet there had been a better life open to his splendid genius. It may be profitable to imagine what Clive might have been if in the fatal year of his

life, 1757, he had been able to subdue the corroding desire of enriching himself quickly. We may grant, and fairly grant, that he felt then the absolute necessity, for the security of British interests, of replacing Siráju'd daulah by Mír J'afar; we may even grant that he felt the necessity, for the security of the same interests, of so hampering Mír J'afar by enforced payments of money, as to deprive him of the power of turning against his allies. What a position would have been his if he had paid the money so acquired into the coffers of the Company, instead of dividing it with his fellow-servants of the Company! No need would then have been felt for forging the name of Watson, or for breaking faith with Amíchand! Clive would have returned to England the immaculate hero; the illustrious warrior who, with hands unspotted, had given the nucleus of a new empire to his country. Nor would that have been his only reward. He would not, it is true, have amassed the fortune which he actually acquired; but it may well be surmised that neither his country nor the Court of Directors would have allowed him to remain a poor man. It is even possible that, in their appreciation of his disinterested conduct, the India House might have allowed him to retain, without a murmur, the jaghír which Mír J'afar, just prior to his return to England, had conferred upon him. That, however, is but a trifling detail. The fact would have stood out that this man, who had conquered Bengal, had achieved a more difficult conquest over himself. Still young, gifted, ambitious, what a career was not open to him! Untrained as a

speaker, his first great speech in the House of Commons had wonderfully impressed so critical a judge of eloquence as was Lord Chatham. What if he had been able to use his oratorical powers, not to defend himself, but to serve his country! There is no limit to the vista which such a contemplation offers. A great reputation, a lofty and spotless character, genius unmeasured, great oratorical power, and forty-four! Everything was possible.

It was not to be. The want of scruple, which impelled him to throw aside every principle in order to clutch at the moneys of Siráju'd daulah, made of a life, which might have been brilliant beyond comparison, a failure ending in self-immolation. Clive laid the foundation of the British Empire in India; but he did not leave behind him that which a man as unscrupulous as himself, the great Napoleon, truly declared to be the best inheritance a man can leave to his children—"a reputation without spot."

Can it be that there is something in the career of the conqueror which deadens conscience and scorns scruple? Look at Alexander, at Caius Julius, at Frederic II., at Napoleon! Clive was not worse than they. The work of Clive was, all things considered, as great as that of Alexander; it has endured far longer than that of Napoleon. Frederic triumphed to the last in spite of his want of scruple; and his work, continued on the same basis, triumphs still. It was that want, however, which was fatal personally to Alexander and to Caius Julius, fatal politically to

Napoleon. The reader has seen how fatal it was to the conqueror of Plassey!

To sum up. Clive was a great soldier, a great administrator, a born leader of his fellows. The bluntness of his moral perceptions prevented him from being a great man!

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